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President Bill Clinton confers with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, moments before his departure for Washington yesterday evening. (API)

Clinton leaves without pullout deal

By DANNA HARMAN

President Bill Clinton left Israel yesterday, after a three day visit during which he failed to convince the government to commit to the next West Bank redeployment. While the stated mission of the journey – encouraging and overseeing the nullification of the PLO charter sections calling for Israel's destruction – was accomplished, Clinton was not able to convince the government to commit to redeploy on schedule this Friday. He was also unsuccessful in his attempts to mediate in the prisoner dispute or to extract any promises from the Palestinians regarding a cessation of the violence in the West Bank.

here to achieve. The message of this trip is that yesterday (Monday) was a historic day. It was a very important day for both peoples. Now we have to decide on practical means to go forward, and I think we are well on the way

Palestinians come out winners, Page 3

to doing that." The president then enumerated what steps had been agreed upon between the sides. He said it had been decided to "energize" the permanent-status talks, "vigorously pursue the security issue through the appropriate committee," and create an "informal channel" to deal with the prisoner dispute.

Clinton added that Secretary of

State Madeleine Albright would be returning to the region in several weeks to help further push the process forward.

These are but small condolences to the peace process at a time when prisoner demonstrations are heating up and the government still has a long list of conditions the Palestinians must fulfill before a redeployment takes place.

Clinton said it would be "unfortunate" if the redeployment fell too far behind schedule.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, speaking at a separate press conference, reiterated his position that Israel has done its part.

"We withdrew from the land, allowed for the opening of the Dahaniya airport, released hundreds of prisoners, and allowed the opening of the Karni industrial park, where we invested millions. Now it is important for the

Palestinians to carry out their part," said Netanyahu, who handed Clinton a list of commitments the government insists the Palestinians are breaking.

First and foremost, according to the list, the Palestinians must renounce their intention to unilaterally declare a state. Clinton, in response, told reporters that it was "okay to advocate how you want this to come out. That's okay. Neither side should try to stop the other from saying what their vision of the future is. That would be a terrible mistake."

This is the first time Clinton has publicly expressed such sentiments, but it is part of a new US take on this matter. At Sunday's meeting with the cabinet, Clinton and US Mideast envoy Dennis Ross reportedly brought up the same argument.

See CLINTON, Page 4

Mordechai considers quitting gov't

Neeman tenders resignation to PM

By SARAH HONIG and DAVID HARRIS

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai may announce at the end of the week that he is either distancing himself from the government or even leaving it, while Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman already tendered his resignation to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu over the weekend.



Yitzhak Mordechai (G. Markovitch)



Yaakov Neeman (Brian Henderson)

MKs look to no-confidence vote, Page 2

Mordechai's restlessness comes against the background of a militant stance by Netanyahu vis-a-vis the Palestinians and Americans, and renewed talk that he might initiate early elections himself. Adding to the sense that the government is crumbling were persistent signals from Mordechai in the last few days that he will have a significant statement to make about the state of the coalition by the end of the week. A

source very close to him said that he will have "a very strong statement to make."

According to the Prime Minister's Office, Neeman has asked Netanyahu to allow him to resign. His resignation was not accepted immediately and Netanyahu asked him to wait until after the Clinton visit. Neeman obliged and went off on a skiing holiday in Europe. He is expected to step down next week.

"All we can say is we confirm that Finance Minister Neeman requested to tender his resignation before he went on his holiday, and the prime minister said they will discuss it on his return," Netanyahu's spokesman Aviv Bushinsky said. The Treasury refused to deny that Netanyahu has already accepted Neeman's resignation.

See MORDECHAI, Page 4

Coalition facts and fears

ANALYSIS

By SARAH HONIG

It is hard to separate fact from fear-mongering in coalition politics these days. Is Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu really considering initiating his own early elections bill? Is Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai really considering a dramatic move at week's end? Or is everybody merely trying to scare everybody else?

It could well be that Mordechai wants Netanyahu to dread mov-

ing too far to the Right in his effort to win back the right-wing support which Wye cost him. It could be that Netanyahu's cronies are talking about early elections in much the same vein that they

spoke of them several weeks back, and in the same vein in which they spread rumors of a move to set up a national unity government. Their aim then – and possibly now, too – was to frighten those who threatened to bring down the government. Some of them are far from sure they will be back for the next Knesset.

See COALITION, Page 4

The real damage

The real damage caused to Israel's strategic interests by the events of the past three days is not that the Palestinians are advancing willy-nilly toward statehood. That was happening before President Bill Clinton arrived. Rather, it is that a US president has become more comfortable discussing the Palestinians' future with them than with Israel.

How did we arrive at this state of affairs?

The events of Binyamin Netanyahu's first months in office in 1996 convinced both Palestinian Authority Chairman Arafat and Netanyahu that the latter, for rea-

ANALYSIS

By JOSEPH KATZ

sons involving both personality and policy – the conflict between his commitments to both a peace process and the Greater Land of Israel – was unable to negotiate or even dialogue directly with the PLO.

It was at the emergency summit of October 1996, after the Western Wall tunnel incident, that Netanyahu first turned to the US for help. In short order, he transformed the American role from facilitator to mediator, and was rewarded with the Hebron Agreement.

See DAMAGE, Page 4

Momentum for impeachment builds

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – President Bill Clinton's hopes of avoiding impeachment by the House of Representatives dwindled yesterday, with more Republicans backing impeachment and one who had opposed it switching his stand.

In a major blow to the White House, Rep. Jack Quinn of New York, one of the first Republicans to say he would oppose Clinton's impeachment, announced he

would vote for the four articles of impeachment tomorrow.

Quinn's decision, along with pro-impeachment announcements by several previously undecided congressmen, left a dwindling pool of possible support for Clinton to draw from in reaching the 218 votes he needs to stave off impeachment.

"Clearly, the momentum is in the direction of the House voting articles of impeachment," said Sen. Joe Lieberman, the Connecticut Democrat who in September broke with the president and criticized his behavior as "immoral."

See IMPEACH, Page 4

A new exhibition in the Bloomfield Science Museum Jerusalem

Hanukka Events-Blue in Your Eyes

Blue Screen: Experience blue screen techniques: swimming with dolphins, walking on the moon, presenting the weather report.

Find the Camera: Detective and the spy who crept into the room with a hidden "broadcasting" through the balls.

What Can Blue do? Circus performance in the blue world for the whole family. Two clowns find themselves in a world where everything is blue. What happens when the clowns see their images on various screens?

Arrow of Time: Experience time reversal of events.

Blue in Your Eye events: Tuesday (second candle of Hanukka), Dec. 15, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; Wednesday (third candle), Dec. 16 (10 a.m.-6 p.m.); Thursday (fourth candle), Dec. 17, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Friday (fifth candle), Dec. 18, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; Saturday (sixth candle), Dec. 19, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sunday (seventh candle), Dec. 20, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Monday (eighth candle), Dec. 21, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

The Djanogly Centre and exhibition was created through the generosity of Sir Harry Djanogly of London. A project of the Jerusalem Foundation.

Bloomfield Science Museum Jerusalem

Founded by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Jerusalem Foundation. Activities supported by the Jerusalem Municipality, Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, Ministry of Science and the Jerusalem Foundation. Address: Museum Blvd., Givat Ram, Jerusalem, Tel. 02-561-8128

Internet: <http://www.mada.org.il>



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NEWS

in brief

Body of missing Beersheba merchant found

The body of Ya'acov Yona, 31, a fruit-and-vegetable merchant from Beersheba who was reported missing by his wife on Sunday, was found in an orchard near Tira yesterday. Police are investigating whether he was murdered by criminals or terrorists.

Police said two Palestinians from Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip were in custody for alleged involvement in the murder, but the main suspect is still at large.

Jerusalem Post Staff

Jordan says it will take part in final-status talks

Jordan's Crown Prince Hassan said yesterday Jordan will take part in the final-status talks because of issues that directly affect it, such as the fate of displaced Palestinians, who make up roughly two-thirds of Jordan's 3.8 million people.

Hassan, who is acting as regent while King Hussein is receiving cancer treatment in the US, spoke to reporters at a joint news conference with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

Albright, who briefed Hassan on President Bill Clinton's visit, also said she and Hassan had discussed \$200 million in increased aid to Jordan, which now receives \$225 million a year in US aid.

AP

Pregnant woman dies in car crash

A 31-year-old pregnant woman, Alexandra Bazeman, was fatally injured yesterday afternoon when her car collided with a bus in Rishon LeZion. Bazeman was rushed to Sheba Hospital at Tel Hashomer in critical condition. She died shortly afterwards. Although she was in an advanced state of pregnancy, doctors were unable to save the baby.

Itim

Palestinian prisoners end hunger strike

At the urging of Palestinian Authority leaders, Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons resumed eating regularly yesterday, ending a 10-day hunger strike to press for their release. The Palestinian Prisoners Association said in a statement that solidarity strikes in support of the prisoners were also "suspended." Tensions over the prisoner issue rose late last month, when Israel's release of 150 prisoners under the Wye Memorandum included mostly criminal, rather than security, offenders.

Ben Lynefield

Haifa police arrest 15 for violent crimes

Police recently arrested 15 people, mostly residents of the Haifa area, on suspicion of involvement in a series of violent crimes, including murder, attempted murder, rape, and kidnapping. A press ban regarding the inquiries was lifted yesterday.

Ch. Supt. Yitzhak Tyler, head of the Haifa Criminal Investigations Department, said eight of the suspects had admitted to being involved in the murder of a 75-year-old man at his home in Haifa in April 1996, and the attempted murders of two men near the Checkpoint two weeks ago. The eight are also believed to be connected, along with the seven other suspects, to a series of kidnappings of women, of raping some of them, and of involvement in extortion and protection rackets.

David Rudge

Mild quakes in Dead Sea and Kinneret areas

A mild earthquake, measuring 3.6 on the Richter scale, was felt at Lake Kinneret at 1:17 p.m. yesterday, a few kilometers west of Ein Gev.

This earthquake followed three the night before at the Dead Sea, just east of Masada, which happened at 9:45 p.m., 00:17 a.m., and 1:37 a.m., reading 3.1, 3.2, and 3.6 respectively on the Richter scale. No damage from the quakes was reported.

Itim

Three Palestinians wounded in El-Khader

The IDF Spokesman said it is investigating reports that three Palestinians were wounded, one by five fire, in El-Khader, near Bethlehem yesterday.

Israel Radio reported that an IDF undercover unit mingled among Palestinians throwing stones at passing Israeli vehicles and arrested six of them. The IDF said it carried out an investigation and found that troops used live fire, but only shot in the air to disperse rioters.

Margot Dudkevitch

Hamas fundraiser ordered released from US jail

A man jailed for failing to testify before a grand jury probing US fund-raising by Hamas was ordered released on Monday.

US District Judge Michael B. Mukasey said it "appears likely that further coercive imprisonment" of Ismael Elbarasse would not lead him to cooperate with the investigation, even though he has been granted immunity.

Elbarasse, a Palestinian with American citizenship who works as the finance officer for a private Islamic school in Virginia, was found in contempt of court on April 6, and has been held in a correctional center since April 13.

He was accused of sharing an American checking account from which a contribution of several hundred thousand dollars was made to Palestinian groups abroad.

AP

MKS look to no-confidence vote and early elections

By LIAT COLLINS

Talk in the Knesset yesterday focused on how MKs will behave in Monday's scheduled no-confidence votes and the vote on the first reading of the early elections bill.

Likud MKs, including coalition whip Meir Sheerit, did not rule out the possibility that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will initiate early elections and fix a date.

One option is for the prime minister to ask United Torah Judaism to withdraw its no-confidence motion, filed last week to stall the early elections bill. The bill could then come up for a first reading Monday and if passed it would return to the Law Committee, allowing the coalition time to decide on a date for elections or how to act to avert them.

Political pundits are also discussing a renewed government approach to David Levy and Geshet.

It is considered unlikely that the prime minister will ask the president to agree to the Knesset being dissolved for early elections. Another even less likely scenario is that the prime minister will announce his own resignation so that there will be elections for the premiership only. He would, if reelected, remain with the same difficult coalition.

Labor leader Ehud Barak in a Knesset press conference called on Netanyahu to meet and agree on a date for new elections. "This is a government which has failed in all fields," he said. "In the present situation in which the whole system is collapsing and trust in the government both in the Knesset and among the public is collaps-

ing [early elections] are the only correct road to take." Barak and Labor MKs yesterday met with three foreign political strategists.

Sheerit said he expects a full turn out. "I'm not sure Labor and the opposition are acting properly and aren't just pushing the premier into the hands of the rightwingers who oppose the peace," said Sheerit. Asked if Netanyahu will call early elections, Sheerit said, "The prime minister does not want to bring down his own government as far as it depends on him but in my opinion he won't be able to continue unless there is progress in the peace process."

MK Ruvy Rivlin (Likud), considered close to Netanyahu, said "Clearly we have reached a crossroads at which the final status arrangements must be brought before

the public, and in this matter if he cannot live with this under the present coalition he will have to take the matter to the people."

Much is considered to hinge on the behavior of members of the Land of Israel Front led by Geshet MK Michael Kleiner. Yesterday Kleiner and Likud MK Benny (Z'ev) Begin both repeated that they would vote no-confidence in the prime minister Monday. Kleiner said, "[Netanyahu] has crossed all the red lines." "This government which is just giving in should be brought down as soon as possible," Begin said.

Rivlin, who is deputy chairman of the National Elections Committee, yesterday said that despite the Direct Elections Law, which calls for elections to be held 60 days after a no-confidence motion passes, other laws prevent this.

Mordechai denies being snubbed by PM

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai denied yesterday that he was snubbed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu following yesterday's summit at the Erez crossing. He said that his absence from a press conference by Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon should not be interpreted as a disagreement with them or dissatisfaction with the way the negotiations with the Palestinians are being handled.

"It was decided that President Clinton would appear alone and the prime minister would hold a press conference and that is what happened," Mordechai said.

Those close to Mordechai also said Mordechai's absence had no significance. They said that Mordechai drove off after the meeting, since it was understood that the prime minister would meet the media. Sharon may have asked to take part or been invited by Netanyahu later.

Mordechai also held meetings last night in an effort to get the peace process back on track.

"I heard very well the call by the president of the United States, and I add to this my call to find all the right ways to return the peace process to its main path," Mordechai told reporters.

Mordechai said he wants the committees agreed upon in the Wye accord to be immediately renewed.

"We have to do everything possible to build a process of discussion... and dealing with terror and violence," he said. "It is very important to put the Wye agreement back on the right track, which was reached after so much effort, and advance to reach the main goal of peace with security."

Mordechai met yesterday evening with US envoy Dennis Ross and Ambassador Edmund Walker. Defense sources said a number of options were being debated, but they declined to elaborate.



Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai greets visiting Turkish Air Force chief Gen. Ilhan Kilic yesterday. (Israel Sun)

Israel wants to expand defense cooperation with Turkey

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, who departs for an official visit to Greece at the weekend, told visiting Turkish Air Force commander Gen. Ilhan Kilic that Israel wants to expand defense cooperation with Ankara.

Israel sees these relations as important for the stability of the region and a link between the countries, he said, adding that defense cooperation could be increased, and Israel is prepared to

give Turkey help in other areas.

Kilic told Mordechai and his top aides that he was impressed with the high level of technology in the country. They also spoke of possible areas for deepening their cooperation on certain projects.

Israel is currently upgrading Turkish F-4 and F-5 fighters and Kilic said he is satisfied with the progress of the project at Israel Aircraft Industries.

Turkey is in the midst of a modernization program and Israeli firms are keen on signing arms

deals with Turkey.

The Turkish military attaché here said in an interview with the IDF magazine *B'mahaneh* this week that Turkey is interested in buying the Merkava tank and using Israel's rich expertise to help it design a main battle tank.

Kilic's visit comes on the heel of a visit by the commander of the Greek Air Force. Greece has criticized the close military ties between Israel and Turkey, saying the alliance is a threat to the balance of power.

Israel and Turkey have been

allowing each other to use their air space for training. Turkish reports said a squadron of Turkish F-16s was here last June for training on testing grounds jointly run by the Israel Air Force and missile manufacturer Rafael. The reports in the daily *Hurriet* said the jets were training on how to evade surface-to-surface missiles, possibly similar to the Russian S-300s that Greek Cypriots plan to deploy in November to balance Turkish air superiority over the island.

Avoid sanctions on Swiss banks, envoy pleads

By THOMAS O'DWYER

Despite this country's past mistakes regarding Jewish bank accounts and property, imposing sanctions on Switzerland would be unjust and not constructive, Swiss Ambassador Pierre Monod said yesterday.

Monod told a packed auditorium at Bar-Ilan University that the Swiss government "is committed to shedding a full light on our history, no matter how painful that

process may be.

"The [Holocaust] survivors, their families and heirs are entitled to the complete truth on the role of Switzerland before, during and after World War II," he said.

The ambassadors of Sweden, France, and Hungary attended the lecture.

Monod said Switzerland took no part in the Holocaust and did not help its perpetrators. "Mistakes were made and these must be admitted. However, we must be

wary of, and avoid, imposing sanctions on Swiss banks which would be unjust and non-constructive."

Monod said Swiss banks are spending millions of dollars tracing Holocaust-era accounts and "at the end of this process not a cent belonging to these Jewish accounts will remain within the walls of any Swiss bank." He said the value of Jewish property discovered in Swiss banks to date is estimated at some \$11 million, and not "in the billions" as first claimed.

He added that a special fund of hundreds of thousands of Swiss francs has been set aside to compensate Holocaust victims. He pleaded for a new effort to reconcile the Swiss with Jews and Israelis, "so that our people and our children can be proud."

A sharp response to Monod's lecture was delivered by Dr. Aviv Bekor, of Bar-Ilan University, who pulled no punches in criticizing both Switzerland's role during the war and its subsequent cover-up of stolen and looted property.

"Despite warnings from the allies, the Swiss made contact with the Germans during the war and lauded the gold looted by the Nazis," said Bekor, director of the World Jewish Congress in Israel. "It was business as usual for the Swiss during the war... they helped prolong the war, along with other states then conceived of as neutral."

Bekor said charges against

Switzerland in general and Swiss banks in particular "are the fruit of factual analysis, not of vague accusations." He said that until they were pressed on the issue three years ago, the Swiss had refused to confront their past.

"The unpleasant issue of money, with all the stereotyping of Jews this subject invariably raises, and the threat of financial sanctions and class-action law suits, are what in fact led the Swiss to examine their collective conscience."

Since the Swiss controversy erupted internationally, Monod has abandoned the quiet diplomatic life of his predecessors and has been active in giving lectures and press briefings to explain his country's position.

Swiss-Israeli relations reached a new low last month. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu canceled a scheduled visit to Bern when it appeared he would get a frosty reception.

The Swiss government was angered when Netanyahu took part in a Knesset ceremony honoring a number of prominent men instrumental in the fight that won a \$1.25 billion settlement from the Swiss banks.

The Swiss consider two of them in particular, WJC president Edgar Bronfman and former US senator Alfonse D'Amato, as Swiss-bashers who went overboard with their accusations and in threatening to call for US economic sanctions.

Michal Yudelman contributed to this report.

IDF intelligence warns of further unrest in territories

By LIAT COLLINS

The head of military intelligence Major General Amos Malka said yesterday that the Palestinian Authority sees the visit to Gaza by President Bill Clinton as an important step towards establishing a Palestinian state. Malka gave his regular monthly review to the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

Malka reportedly warned that further unrest in the territories is likely because the prisoner release issue remains the focus of attention. "It's not clear the Palestinian Authority will be motivated to go against the Palestinian street," Malka warned.

He said today there is a conflict between the so-called "Palestinian street" and the Palestinian Authority leadership. While the "street" wanted riots during Clinton's visit, the leadership tried to keep things quiet.

He added the "street" is accusing the leadership of giving preference to Gaza International Airport over the release of prisoners.

He said the initiative for the demonstrations came from Fatah youth and that the results had strengthened Fatah as an organization.

Malka said the Palestinians see Wye as having strengthened their relations with the US and that the Clinton visit was the height of this warmer relationship.

He said that although the Palestinians did not use the Gaza forum this week to repeat their intention of declaring statehood in May, they see the visit as a strategic gain and an important step towards the creation of a state.

Concerning the security clauses of the Wye agreement, Malka said Israel has not seen a strategic decision by the Palestinians to fight the terror infrastructure according to an organized work plan, but rather localized action mainly as a response to something specific.

He said there is no agreement between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas and if action is not taken against the terror infrastructure it could lead to attacks by Hamas.

Malka also said there is no discernible real effort to collect the illegal arms as the Wye agreement requires.

In the part of his review concerning Lebanon, Malka said that a unilateral IDF withdrawal would not stop attacks against Israel. He said the Lebanese government is now more pro-Syrian than in the past and it is difficult to assume that, should Israel withdraw, the Lebanese Army would enter south Lebanon to stop Hizbullah activities.

David Rudge adds: Hizbullah is developing new tactics and equipment to counter offensive and defensive measures taken by the IDF in the ongoing fighting in south Lebanon, a lead-

ing official of the organization has revealed.

"Our brothers in the Islamic Resistance (Hizbullah's fighting arm) monitor the movements of the enemy and whenever it changes its ways, they also change their ways," Sheikh Naim Kassem, deputy secretary-general of Hizbullah was quoted as saying in the Lebanese press.

"The enemy developed ways of improving the armor on its vehicles and we developed counter measures. The enemy also improved personal protection for its soldiers to minimize losses and... [we found solutions to overcome this level of individual protection and later there were fatal casualties (among IDF troops)]. So the competition between us and the enemy continues. They develop new methods and so do we, and this was proved in the field recently," Kassem continued.

Kassem was apparently referring the chain of Hizbullah bomb attacks, two near the IDF's Tel Kabah outpost in the space of a week and one near the Karkum position, where seven soldiers were killed and nine others wounded.

Since then, Hizbullah has reverted back primarily to long-range mortar fire on IDF and South Lebanese Army outposts in the security zone, as well as bomb attacks mainly against SLA targets in the Jezzine enclave, north of the zone.

GERTRUD SPINDEL

Passed away, December 14, 1998.

At the age of 99.

Deeply mourned by her family and friends.

Bequeathed her body to science.

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and JDC-Israel

extend heartfelt condolences to

Benyamin Chernofsky on the loss of his father

MOSHE CHERNOFSKY 57

May you be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem

סוכה מן הארץ

Clinton gains admirers in Bethlehem

By BEN LYNFIELD

President Bill Clinton, who three years ago won a place in Israeli hearts with his eloquent "Shalom ha'et" eulogy of Yitzhak Rabin, yesterday appeared to be gaining a handful of Palestinian admirers as he visited Bethlehem toward the end of a three-day trip to Israel and the Palestinian Authority areas.

Several hundred people came out to glimpse Clinton's arrival for a brief visit at the Nativity Church, a day after he put Palestinians and Israelis on an equal footing during a landmark speech to Palestinian leaders gathered in Gaza City to affirm the annulment of Palestinian charter clauses calling for Israel's destruction.

At the church, Clinton, his wife Hillary, and daughter Chelsea were hosted by PA Chairman Yasser Arafat and his wife Suha, as a local choir sang "O Little Town of Bethlehem" and other Christmas hymns. They joined in the carols and decorated a Christmas tree.

Several people in the crowd, which was kept far away from Clinton, held up gold-framed photographs of relatives being held as prisoners in Israeli jails.

Signs of a postering blitz by the PA abounded: young girls walked around with "Free Palestine" signs affixed to their shirts; banners and signs proclaimed "Release my father from Israeli jails."

The embattled US president clearly made a good impression on Palestinian viewers when he said Monday that he had had nearly cried in the wake of two meetings — one with the children of Palestinian prisoners and the other with children of Israelis whose fathers died at the hands of Palestinians. He also said that

"neither side has a monopoly on suffering or virtue."

Issa Shakarna, 33, a building contractor, said: "I saw in his eyes that he was really feeling. He is a man with a good heart." But Shakarna added that he doubts that would make any practical difference in US policy, which he views as completely biased in Israel's favor.

"I think Clinton can't do anything by himself. He has the Congress in America which determines the policy. He wants to make peace. He's not like [former president George] Bush, but he cannot do anything because of the Zionist lobby," Shakarna said.

Manar Mohammed, 15, a pupil, added: "When we see him he looks good, but we don't know what's inside him." She said she hopes Clinton will pressure Israel to ease strictures on travel to Jerusalem, which were tightened after Hamas suicide bombings. "We feel closed in here in Bethlehem," she said.

Elias Atrash, a businessman, said: "I think Clinton understands our needs. I think he understands that we are a people who want freedom like others. He recognizes us as a nation."

A different view was offered by Mohammed Hamad, who sells jewelry. "Clinton has given us a bit of recognition and that is positive, but nothing has really changed. He is not pressing Israel on behalf of our rights, he is not stopping the settlements, and he is not freeing our prisoners," said Hamad, who has a ribbon-adorned poster of the late Hamas bomb-maker, Yihya Ayyash, behind the counter.

"Clinton came here for one thing only," he said. "To hand the Israelis the nullification of the charter."



President Bill Clinton places a ribbon on a Christmas tree outside the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem's Manger Square yesterday morning. Bethlehem was Clinton's second stop on a day that began with a summit meeting at Erez and included a visit to Masada. (AP)

Call to probe terror killings of Americans

By ELI WOLFGELER

Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) said last night he will have his Senate subcommittee conduct a public fact-finding hearing on Palestinian terrorists who have murdered American citizens. Specter made his intentions known following a meeting with a group of parents whose children were murdered by Palestinian terrorists. "The parents had met with Rep. Brad Sherman (D-Cal.) and Rep. Jon Fox (R-Pa.) on Saturday night to urge them to prod the Palestinian Authority to extradite the killers of Americans to the US for prosecution."

"This issue would have more vitality if we talked in a Senate hearing room," Specter told the parents. "I would take the lead, invest the time, and conduct the hearing." A letter was sent late last night to the chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), asking that the committee hold a hearing on the issue as soon as Congress reconvenes.

Specter's spokesman, John Ulyot, said the hearing could be held as early as late next month or early February, and that it would also include testimony from families of Americans who were injured from acts of terrorism. Eleven

Americans have been killed in terror attacks since the Oslo Accords were signed in 1993.

Last night's 20-minute meeting in the Hilton Hotel, organized by the Zionist Organization of America, included Joyce Boim, mother of David Boim, who was killed in a drive-by shooting near Beit El on May 13, 1996; Esther Wachsmann, mother of Nachshon Wachsmann, who was kidnapped on October 9, 1994 and murdered by Hamas; and Yehudit Dassberg, mother-in-law of Yaron Ungar, who was killed near Beit Shemesh on June 9, 1996.

"If he can carry it out, that'll be wonderful," said Boim after the meeting. "He's got the power. I'd like to see funds for Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Authority stopped until these terrorists are handed over." Specter said he would also consider having the United States issuing a bounty for the capture of the terrorists.

"We don't have an extradition treaty [between the US and the PA], but Arafat has a lot of power — if he wants to hand them over, he can," said Specter.

The Appropriations Subcommittee controls all foreign funding, and would be able to stipulate preconditions on allocations — like the \$400 million pledged by President Bill Clinton to the PA — based on facts presented in a hearing.

Palestinians come out winners

ANALYSIS

Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat walked out early, and President Bill Clinton turned his back and mumbled off mike. There were no handshakes, no smiles, no photo opportunities. All the well-laid US plans seemed to have fallen apart at this, the final, crucial moment.

And yet Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stood there firm, holding tight to the ball that had fallen smack into his court, and refusing to play.

"I don't want to repeat myself," said Netanyahu after the Erez summit meeting yesterday morning, "but I will anyway."

If ever Clinton had visions of tidying up the whole mess of a peace process here by using the momentum of the historic denunciation of the PLO charter to get Netanyahu's promise to redeploy; and if he ever thought he would manage to broker a compromise on prisoner release and stop the violence in the West Bank — his hopes were dashed at Erez.

The tides of history may be pulling us forward — but the government remains rooted in place, chanting its mantra over and over again. "They fulfill — they receive, they don't fulfill — they don't receive."

The summit meeting, said Netanyahu, had been good for "string differences." Clinton claimed it had been "very frank." If the meeting were applying for job, let's say, it would be well advised not to ask these men for a recommendation. The subtext was clear. The meeting was terrible.

Clinton came here on a gamble, and he lost.

The president managed neither to run away from his problems back home, nor to alleviate the problems here. Committees, which have been running all along and solving nothing — will now be reinvigorated, he promised. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will come over to continue sorting things out. US assistant Mideast envoy Aaron Miller will remain in the region to continue overseeing Wye implementation. What, however, can Albright accomplish where Clinton has failed? And equally perplexing, what implementation is Miller meant to be overseeing?

While Clinton may have lost his bid to jump-start the process, it is crystal clear that there are even bigger losers in this game — we, the Israelis.

"We have our policy position," Netanyahu claimed yesterday, setting up for a variation of his most oft used phrase: "And if they want to join — they should join. If not — not." The notion, however, that Netanyahu is unconcerned with his political survival is absurd.

And it is with an eye to Monday — the day on which Netanyahu will be fighting for that very survival — that he makes his decisions.

The US administration is well aware of Netanyahu's precarious political position, and is willing to give him some leeway because of it.

"There is a general belief that what is important is what is said behind closed doors, and not what Netanyahu says to his public at this point," said one US official.

"The problem is that he now says the same things behind closed doors." Whether or not Netanyahu has managed to save his coalition by taking such an unbending stance on the peace process has yet to be seen.

What can be seen is that that Netanyahu has managed, again, to antagonize our best friends, the Americans.

"In the long haul," said Netanyahu yesterday, "the friendship between Israel and the United States is very powerful." This may be true, but right now, in the wake of backpedaling over the invitation, and with Netanyahu crediting his own stubbornness for the successful PNC meeting — concluding that he must remain stubborn on all other points — the Americans are not feeling too friendly.

And although Arafat often likes to point out that peace-making is not a zero-sum game, the Palestinians are the winners in this round.

Shaking, stammering, and at times seeming to doze off to sleep, Arafat has managed to manipulate two of the world's slickest manipulators: With a lot of help, it should be mentioned, from none other than Netanyahu himself. He helped bring Clinton to Gaza and made a demand that was as easy to carry out as it was meaningless to many, but which rewarded the Palestinians with great international applause.

The Palestinians pulled off a feat of extraordinary proportions, bringing the leader of the free world to the streets of Gaza. Meeting with teary children of security prisoners, Clinton recognized their suffering. Cutting the ribbon at the newly inaugurated Gaza International Airport Clinton recognized their need for freedom. He also recognized their need for equality, acknowledged their need for a better future and held out a very friendly hand to the man who was once barred entrance to the US. He did everything, in brief, except officially recognize their independence.

But that, Arafat knows, will come later. "It is okay," said Clinton, all the wiser after his trip to Gaza, "to advocate how you want this to come out."

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LEADING THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS REVOLUTION IN ISRAEL



A tired Clinton tours Masada

By HILIEL KUTTLER

The red cable car that President Bill Clinton took to Masada's peak yesterday won't magically keep him aloft as he faces tomorrow's impeachment vote. But the visit capped his three-day visit quite nicely just the same.

The day was meant to be an opportunity to relax, touring Israeli and Palestinian historical sites, the better to learn about each people's link to a land whose future he is helping them negotiate.

The morning's summit at Erez, and the two previous days of meetings, apparently took their toll on Clinton, as he appeared "very tired" to his guide, Hebrew University archaeology professor Ehud Netzer.

After landing by helicopter across the Arava road, the Clintons made their way by motorcade to the rock fortress, and the president changed into olive slacks and a brown sports jacket in a dressing room specially built at the restaurant.

Clinton, his wife Hillary and daughter Chelsea listened attentively throughout the 75-minute tour, Netzer said. Hillary Clinton said she and her husband had toured Masada 17 years ago and remembered a bit of its history.

When the Clintons and Prime Minister and Sara Netanyahu turned into the upper palace's courtyard, the president gasped "Wow!" at the sight of the Dead Sea and Jordan mountains on the wonderfully clear afternoon.

He turned to Netanyahu and asked where Mt. Nebo is. Netanyahu pointed south, but Netzer said it was actually across from Qumran to the north.

The question, though, brought Clinton to mention that many towns in the US, including near where he grew up in Arkansas, were in the late 19th century named for biblical places by people who had never even visited them.



President Bill Clinton, his wife Hillary and daughter Chelsea tour Masada yesterday with Prime Minister Binyamin and Sara Netanyahu.

At the large storehouse, Clinton was shown a photograph of a black ceramic amphora, a jar for shipping wine that contained the inscription King Herod of Judea. He also toured the room where Masada's last residents during the Roman siege took up lots to decide the order of who would commit suicide.

As the dignitaries approached the cable car to begin their ascent, their hosts had presented a stainless steel menorah depicting four

silhouettes of Masada, made by Ein Hod artist Arie Ofir. Set at the foot of the silhouettes is a reproduction of one of the 11 ostracons, inscribed with the name Shimon, that was prepared for the suicide.

The Clintons also received a compact disk of Shuki Levy's musical "Masada: The Musical Saga," and they and the Netanyahu's all got Israel Nature and Parks Authority sweatshirts.

At the quarry, photographers

clicked away as the Netanyahu's and Clintons listened to Netzer describe its later function as a moat to prevent thefts of food and wine from the storehouse.

Near the end of the tour, Clinton observed preservationists patching holes in a wall and took up tools to lend a hand.

Assaf Shalom, head of the preservation and reconstruction team at Masada, said the presidential visit will help sell preservation

to the Israeli public.

Masada's managers intend to seek businesses' sponsorship of the site and believe that if that occurs, Israelis will want to contribute directly, too.

"We must conserve, and relay the message to tourists who took the time to come and see the touch of humanity that passed. So, today we're taking a new approach to make public awareness of the issue of the conservation of heritage sites."

PM reunites with high school pal

• FOR Congressman Jon Fox, coming here this week meant a reunion with an old friend: Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu.

Their history goes back to the mid-1960s when Netanyahu was a sophomore and Fox a senior at Cheltenham High School, just outside Philadelphia, at a time when Netanyahu's father Ben-Zion taught at nearby Dropsie College.

Netanyahu met Sunday with Fox and the other members of the congressional delegation that came here with President Bill Clinton. The get-together gave the two a chance to refresh old times.

They had kept in periodic contact through the years via a mutual friend, Steve Friedman, a Philadelphia lawyer who served as general counsel to the Likud. While Fox did not socialize much in school with Netanyahu, he recalls his fellow alumnus as "very friendly, much respected by classmates, and one of the brightest students."

Both were on the school's debating team, and Netanyahu also played varsity soccer and was on the world affairs council.

Some in the school had joked then that "he'd be a leader of a country. We just didn't know which one," said Fox, a Pennsylvania Republican who was defeated in November in a bid for a third term.

"We knew he was interested in world affairs and was a great speaker. He talked about going back to Israel, so those of us who knew him are not surprised he became prime minister. It's not everyone who grows up in high school and has a friend who becomes a prime minister."

• FIRST Lady Hillary Rodham

Clinton yesterday told children who have been studying together at an Israeli-Arab youth center that it is they who have the most at stake in Middle East peacemaking efforts.

"Peace is something that has to be worked for and negotiated over and achieved, because then it creates conditions in which each of you can live up to your own potential and fulfill your own promise," she told the 120 children, ranging from 8 to 14.

She was joined by MK Shimon Peres, who told the children: "Your generation does not have to follow and repeat the mistakes we committed in the past."

The boys and girls presented Clinton with artwork, including a mosaic made from brightly colored tiles, and told her they had benefited from their time with one another.

Miki Hazav, 14, from Kibbutz Sde Boker, said in the youth center program with Arab children, "I learned that it's possible to talk and be friends. They are like us."

Shirin Mizher, 14, from the Dehaisha refugee camp, said she was happy about the visit by the Clintons.

"We are looking to them... to make peace a real peace," she said.

• CHELSEA Clinton couldn't get enough of Jerusalem's Old City on Sunday, so the Stanford University sophomore took another walking tour yesterday on her last morning in town.

Chelsea spent about an hour strolling along the Via Dolorosa, pausing at various holy sites. She also stopped in on an Armenian pottery store, waving and smiling at shopkeepers who called out greetings.

Hilton returns to normal

By NAMI SHAPIRO

The Clintons checked out of the Jerusalem Hilton early yesterday, but not until last night did the hotel stop functioning as a second White House.

According to US protocol, not until Air Force One took off and was out of Israeli air space for three hours did the presidential visit officially end. At that point, the remaining US staff members threw a party.

Prior to their departure, the Hilton presented Bill and Hillary Clinton with two lithographs, with a view of the Old City as seen from their Presidential Suite. The hotel also presented a lithograph to Chelsea with a view of the Old City as seen from the Mt. of Olives.

Last night, hotel workers began refurbishing rooms which had been converted into offices, taking beds and bedside lamps out of the storage rooms, and the staff began to return to normal procedures.

"Mostly, we will have to send 500 workers to get some sleep," said Israel Hilton public relations director Moti Verses.

According to Verses, many members of the hotel staff only slept an hour or two a night during the past four days. Some staff members slept at the hotel and others were accommodated at the nearby

YMCA.

However, Verses noted that the staff members, whose average age is 23, could take the pressure.

"It was the best team-building exercise there could possibly be," Verses said.

In a related development, Jerusalem Hotel Association director Yonatan Harpaz said that the visit had given the local hotel industry a needed shot in the arm and he hoped it would also help bring future guests.

"At the beginning of December there are usually no tourists and the situation in Jerusalem was worse than ever this year," Harpaz said.

The Hotel Association director pointed out that the presidential party, with some 1,200 people, not to speak of the many journalists, would make a considerable difference to the hotel occupancy figures for December. He added that although the president had only come for four days, many of those coming with him had preceded him and would leave after he did.

However, Harpaz was mainly interested in the fact that over the past few days Jerusalem had been featured in a positive context in television broadcasts around the world. He said he hopes that this would influence those who had been afraid to come to visit.

ingly difficult to discuss these issues with Netanyahu.

Some of them — such as borders and Palestinian military capabilities — touch directly on Israeli and Jordanian security, and by now should have been carefully coordinated between Jerusalem and Washington. Amman's nervousness is audible.

This state of affairs is not Clinton's fault. He remains involved, because he sees this as the only way to keep the process alive. Yet his heavy involvement is a clear sign not of the health of this process, but rather of the sickness that has beset it. This is the most negative development to emerge from the past 30 months' management of the peace process.

The writer is director of the American Jewish Committee's Israel-Middle East office.

MIA families discuss plight with First Lady

By ELI WOHLGELER

Hillary Rodham Clinton said the issue of three Israeli MIAs was raised again by President Bill Clinton in his meeting with Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat, according to Yona Baumel, father of one of the soldiers, following a meeting yesterday morning between Hillary Clinton and the families of the three soldiers.

"She said she knows that the case was raised during the president's trip, but she didn't know any results," said Baumel, father of Zachary Baumel, who with

Yehuda Katz and Tzvi Feldman has been missing since the battle of Sultan Yakoub in Lebanon in June 1982.

Baumel said his wife, Miriam, asked Clinton "to help facilitate our efforts to gain more information in the States under the Freedom of Information Act, to know what information they have." Clinton told the group — which included representatives of the Foreign Ministry and the IDF, which organized the 15-minute meeting at the Hilton Hotel — that she would contact Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA), who is on his way to Syria, to ask him to take up the case, and that she would see what she could do to

obtain more information under the Freedom of Information Act.

"She's an extremely competent, well versed person, she knew exactly where it was at," said Baumel. "She indicated her desire and willingness to help, so I hope that in some way she will carry this forward." The topic of what information Arafat might have was also brought up, Baumel said, and that they told Clinton "that so far all the information that Arafat has given has proven to be false. She listened." This was the third meeting Clinton has had with the families, including one on a previous visit here and another that took

place at the White House.

"We've been to a lot of these meetings, and frankly, we're waiting to see some progress," Baumel said. "We've received many promises, and certainly it is better to receive promises than to have her shrug it off. But we'll have to see."

Pinna Feldman, the mother of Tzvi, said after the meeting: "I hope this will be the last meeting, and that soon we'll be able to see our sons alive."

Batya Arad, the mother of missing navigator Ron Arad, held a separate meeting with Clinton, but refused to talk to reporters afterwards.

MORDECHAI

Continued from Page 1

Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel would not comment.

Neeman is Netanyahu's personal appointee and is the single non-politician in the cabinet. He has no faction or political clout and cannot affect the coalition balance. His exit might open the way back to the government for Geshet leader David Levy.

Netanyahu was loath to let Levy have the Finance portfolio, partly because he did not want to dismiss Neeman. Netanyahu might now have an easier time mollifying Levy, and Levy's entry is a move Mordechai said he would welcome.

But Levy last night announced that he is "not coming back to this government. This government should be sent home. The Wye process has been halted. Economically, everything is falling apart. I will vote for early elections next week."

However, some sources around Netanyahu, as well as sources close to Levy, continue to insist that this need not be considered his last word.

Mordechai is reported to be increasingly displeased with the rightist positions Netanyahu has been adopting, and which Mordechai claims constitute a veering away from Wye.

Other coalition sources said that Netanyahu has little choice but to adopt the positions he has and that Mordechai is well aware of the bind in which Netanyahu is caught. If he chooses to make a dramatic move, it will be because he has concluded that the government is beyond saving.

Likud sources reported that Netanyahu may well call for early elections himself if he concludes by Monday's votes on the pending early elections bill and no-confidence motions that he is unable to stabilize the coalition.

Netanyahu may wish to preempt his coalition's fall or disintegration by moving for early elections in an initiative which would leave him in charge of the election timetable.

By last night, it appeared that the coalition remains extremely vulnerable, though things could change by Monday. The Far Right remains apparently unimpressed by Netanyahu's adamant refusal to consider further pullbacks until the

Palestinians live up to their commitments.

MK Michael Kleiner, who heads the Land of Israel Front, considers it "laughable that this would sway me. The force performed in Gaza, when the Palestinian Covenant was supposedly nullified, only strengthened my resolve to advance the elections. Not one of the conditions necessary for nullification was met. Yet Netanyahu is ostensibly satisfied. His fine speeches are so much artificial muscle flexing; later, he will buckle under yet again."

Molek leader Rehavam Ze'evi wondered "how long Netanyahu will stay tough. Will it be for a couple of weeks only?"

But Tsomet MK Moshe Peled says that "Netanyahu's attitude is encouraging, and if it is maintained, I will not allow the government to fall."

In Labor there was talk that MKs Shimon Peres and Rafi Edri might adopt a similar position, although most in the party doubt they will risk departing so radically from the Labor consensus.

Netanyahu's dilemma, nevertheless, is that if he seeks to appease the Right, he will risk angering the Left and even people like

Mordechai and factions like The Third Way inside his own coalition. If he appeases the Left, he will alienate the far Right.

Some in the Likud hope that, now that Clinton has left, Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon may reestablishing contact with Levy and bring him and two other Geshet MKs into the coalition. Contradictory signals emanated from Geshet yesterday.

Labor MK Dalia Itzik complained that "Netanyahu lacked the minimal good manners to wait for Clinton's departure before sacrificing Israel's relations with the US on the altar of his coalition's survival."

Labor Knesset faction chief Eli Goldschmidt vowed that Labor would go ahead with its early elections bill next Monday, "because the government knows full well that it has no chance for survival."

In an official statement the Likud charged that "Labor is spreading its safety net only for the Palestinians. The Palestinians are never criticized by the Left."

Those close to Science Minister Silvan Shalom said he thinks of himself as the natural successor to Neeman, but admitted that the first he knew about it was last night. Other ministers said they, too, only

heard within the last 12 hours.

Knesset Finance Committee chairman Avraham Ravitz (United Torah Judaism) said he had a private conversation with Neeman immediately prior to his departure on holiday, during which it became clear that the end was near for him and, in his words, for the government.

"There is plenty of speculation, but my opinion is that David Levy should return to the Foreign Ministry, and it would be very interesting to see Ariel Sharon in the Treasury," Ravitz said.

During the last few weeks, Neeman has repeatedly requested the formation of a national unity government, saying he would be willing to resign to allow the expansion of the government.

Neeman has also told confidants he feels he is making little or no progress on the economic front. His tax reform, scheduled for January 1, has been delayed, may be abandoned, and has not received Netanyahu's blessing. With two weeks before the end of the year deadline, it looks increasingly unlikely that the budget and budgetary arrangements bill will be approved.

"The statement was not to say the situations of the children were the same," said one US official, "but rather to point at the suffering on both sides... Netanyahu's reaction only goes to show how small he is. Always finding new things to raise a storm about. Menachem Begin was also a nitpicker, but at least he was a man of principle."

DAMAGE

Continued from Page 1

He came to prefer agreements with the US to agreements with the Palestinians.

By the time he left Wye Plantation in October, the US had moved from mediator to referee. Inevitably, the referee's "calls" have caused the prime minister to invoke his own judgments regarding Palestinian compliance.

With final-status talks and the May 4 deadline looming, Clinton — who must sign a special dispensation every six months to allow the PLO to maintain an office in Washington, where it is still classified as a terrorist organization — appears to be moving into ever closer strategic dialogue with Arafat regarding key final-status issues, even as he finds it increas-

ment — perjury, abuse of power, and obstruction of justice — stem from his affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky and his testimony in the Paula Jones sexual harassment case.

House offices were flooded with phone calls and e-mail messages yesterday, as the public and lobbying groups voiced their position on tomorrow's vote, only the second presidential impeachment vote in history.

Leaders of several women's groups, including the National Organization for Women and the Feminist Majority, held a news conference to oppose Clinton's impeachment.

COALITION

Continued from Page 1

This is true of MKs David Levy, Michael Kleiner, Moshe Peled, and even Avraham Poraz of the Shinui faction of the Meretz alliance. If they really see early elections as likely, they might rethink their declared readiness to bring the government down.

This could indeed be so, but — as both the threateners and those being threatened must realize — there comes a point at which dare games reach their limit. The gov-

ernment is precariously close to the point at which it can no longer go on; indeed, some maintain that it has already passed it. Many ministers doubt it would have a much longer lease on life even if Netanyahu miraculously pulls a rabbit out of his hat and makes up with Levy yet again. They doubt, for instance, that he can pass the budget in two weeks' time.

If Netanyahu, too, has reached the conclusion that the game is up, then he is perhaps earnest about initiating early elections. His utterances at his press conference in Erez yesterday morn-

ing were seen by some as those of one already on the campaign trail, placing him comfortably between the center and the Right and enabling him to make a pitch to both.

If he advances the elections, Netanyahu will be throwing in the towel, but there are still limited gains for him in such a move. It beats being ignominiously brought down in the Knesset, with no control over the campaign timetable. Because he wants such control, Netanyahu is unlikely to go to President Ezer Weizman, who is extremely unfriendly to him. Netanyahu

does not want to resign alone and leave the Knesset to finish its term. But to dissolve the Knesset, he needs the president's cooperation — and he might not get it.

The few days left before the meaningful in political time, and he might yet do the seemingly impossible and shore up his coalition. If he fails to do so, he is unlikely to allow a vote on the no-confidence motion which United Torah Judaism presented earlier in the month to win a delay in the early elections bill. Without a trustworthy majority,

he will have UTJ withdraw its motion. There is a Meretz no-confidence motion pending as well, but it is less dangerous, as not all Netanyahu's in-house coalition rebels are likely to join with Meretz.

Thus, Netanyahu might opt for losing the vote on the first reading of the early elections bill. That bill would then be referred to the Knesset Law Committee again, where it might be held up for a few more weeks. This could offer Netanyahu more time to stabilize the coalition — if his partners have not already given up on it as a lost cause.

Drive Carefully

סכנה מן הצוללות

Barak's US spin doctors hold first meeting with Labor faction

By NINA GILBERT

The three American campaign specialists hired by Labor Party leader Ehud Barak held their first working meeting with the party at the Knesset yesterday.

"This is clearly the beginning of preparations for our election campaign. In today's political reality, it is impossible to know when [elections] will be held," Barak said after leaving the faction meeting with US campaign strategist James Carville, pollster Stanley Greenberg, and US advertising expert Robert Schrum.

The three, who helped President Bill Clinton win the US presidency, are visiting Barak here for the first time — although meetings

were held in the US — and have only come for a few days. Greenberg was involved in the successful campaigns of Britain's Tony Blair and Germany's Gerhard Schröder.

"I am convinced that this government is coming closer to its end," Barak said, noting that he had asked Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday to consider setting a date for early elections. On Monday, the government faces a no-confidence motion — engineered by Netanyahu as a

political respite — on the early elections bill. If the government falls, elections will be held in 60 days — a time frame unlikely to be favored by most parties.

However, if the government

asks United Torah Judaism to withdraw its motion, and the bill passes its first reading, it will put early elections fever into high gear. The bill, which could take anywhere from two to six weeks to come up for its second and third readings, calls for elections in 100 days.

Carville, whose superstar status brought out a mob of reporters yesterday, said he "wouldn't have come this far and taken such a long flight" if he thought Barak was going to lose the elections.

Asked whether he could stand up to the challenge from Netanyahu's adviser Arthur Finkelstein, Carville said: "I think that Israel wants a change in the Netanyahu government, and I don't think they care about Finkelstein or Carville or Greenberg... Barak can run a better government than Netanyahu and in the end that is really what matters."

Barak, when asked whether the advisers would give the party an advantage over the 1996 campaign, said: "We will win the elections with or without the group, but there will be a better campaign with the advisers, who are among the world's most experienced in running modern campaigns."



James Carville, Robert Schrum and Stanley Greenberg (Isaac Harari)



Lighting his way

Knesset Speaker Dan Tichon lights the third Hanukkah candle at the Knesset yesterday with his wife, Ludmilla, after a bill was introduced that would make possible the removal of the Speaker for unfitting behavior if 90 MKs vote for it. "It will drag the Speaker's position into the political stew and the Speaker could become the hostage of the coalition and opposition," Tichon complained. The House Committee accepted his recommendation that, if the bill passes, it will take effect only from the next Knesset.

(Text: Liat Collins; photo: Isaac Harari)

Knesset panel backs return of expats

By ARYEH DEAN COHEN

Two approaches to the problem of encouraging expatriates to return were passed yesterday by the Knesset Immigration and Absorption Committee, with the ultimate handling of the problem expected to be a compromise between the two. Yitzhak Cohen (Shas) proposed a bill which would grant new immigrant status for a period of one year to returning Israelis. Eligibility would be open to those who, if they were not already citizens, would qualify for citizenship under the Law of Return and who lived outside Israel for five years up to April 30, 1998.

According to Cohen's bill, immigrants, returning students, foreign residents, and Israeli citizens who lived in Israel for a total of more than five months in the five years preceding this date would not be eligible. "We can only hope that this incentive will help bring back our sons who served the country loyally and chose to live abroad," he said.

However, committee chairwoman Naomi Blumenthal (Likud) called in her bill for granting an "organizational grant" to "returning residents" with the amount based on the individual status of the returnee.

The committee passed both bills, but committee officials said they expect some form of amalgamation during discussions prior to second and third readings.

NEWS in brief

Investigation against Avi-Yitzhak closed

The State Attorney's Office informed attorney Dan Avi-Yitzhak late last month that the police investigation of him had been closed for "lack of substance to the charges." Police opened their investigation after the media alleged that Avi-Yitzhak, who was a main witness in the Bar-On Affair, had conspired with Ma'ariv publisher Ofer Nimrodi to have himself appointed attorney-general. *Jerusalem Post Staff*

Judge disqualifies himself from murder case

Tel Aviv District Court President Avigdor Mishali yesterday disqualified himself from the case of Gur Hamal, a 28-year-old married yeshiva student from Tel Aviv, accused of the murder of a Palestinian two months ago. Mishali disqualifies himself — even though he does not know the accused — since some of his relatives are friendly with those of the accused. The accused's defense attorney claimed the Tel Aviv court has no jurisdiction in the case, since the crime was committed outside Israeli territory. Hamal is accused of murdering olive-harvester Ahmed Hataha, 68, near the settlement of Itamar in Samaria. *Itim*

Nazareth woman found murdered

The body of a 40-year-old Nazareth woman was found in a storage room in the town yesterday; she had been stabbed to death. Her brother was arrested, and police suspect "family honor" was the motive for the murder. *Itim*

Thai Airlines survivors return home

The Israeli couple who survived the crash of a Thai Airlines plane over the weekend returned to Israel yesterday. Friends and family gave Dany Raphaeli and his wife Limor a warm welcome at Ben-Gurion airport. Both were taken by ambulance to Sheba Hospital in Ramat Gan to recover from their injuries.

Health Minister Yehoshua Matza on Sunday sent a medical team in a private plane to Thailand to bring them back. The cost of the mission was paid for by the Thai airline. Only 46 of the 146 passengers and crew on board survived the crash. *Itim*

Jerusalem Post Toy Fund in action

The Jerusalem Post Toy Fund yesterday unveiled a plaque honoring the late Sophie Lourie of Philadelphia at the Nevech Ya'acov Youth Club in Jerusalem. Through a donation from Lourie's will, the fund was able to assist in purchasing a television, VCR, video camera, computer, furniture, and toys for the club. *Jerusalem Post Staff*

Palestinians, Israelis to establish health center

A delegation of Palestinians from Gaza visited Beersheva's Soroka Hospital this week to discuss plans for jointly establishing a health center at the Karmi crossing point and for exchanging medical experts between them. The Palestinian delegation was headed by Maj.-Gen. Nasser Yousuf of the Palestinian Police, and directors of the Palestinian Authority's Health Ministry and the office of Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat. Prof. Bracha Rager, Health Ministry chief scientist, and Yousuf agreed to hold additional meetings between the two health ministries on an ongoing basis. *Judy Siegel*

New stamp to promote tolerance

A new stamp based on the Education Ministry's theme this year, "The Right to Respect and the Duty to Respect," will be issued today in a festive ceremony to be attended by Reuma Weizman, the wife of the president. Outgoing Postal Authority director-general Moshe Tery said yesterday he hoped the authority's joining the campaign will promote awareness of the need for tolerance. The stamp was based on a drawing by Nitzia Shachopek, a fifth grader at the Ma'aleh Carmel School in Haifa. It was chosen from among drawings by 120 finalists in 83 schools around the country. The drawing by Inbal Reinitz and Tom Reiss of the same school was selected to appear on the stamp's first-day cover. *Judy Siegel*

Non-Orthodox officially join religious councils

The Reform and Conservative nominees for the religious councils of Jerusalem and Kiryat Tivon officially became members of the councils yesterday, with the publication of their appointment in *Reshumot*, the official gazette. The publication only came after the Reform Movement's Israel Religious Action Center appealed to the High Court to declare Religious Affairs Minister Eli Suissa in contempt of court for failing to sign the appointments, as the court had ordered. In place of Suissa, Moshe Leon, director-general of the Prime Minister's Office, signed the order, as he has done in the past. *Haim Shapiro*

Ukrainian customs returns food parcels

Ukrainian custom authorities have informed the Postal Authority that food parcels may not be sent to Ukraine by mail unless they are accompanied by documentation from Ukrainian authorities. Fanny Edri, head of the authority's international relations department, said that recently, many food packages sent by immigrants to their relatives in Ukraine have been returned. Outgoing authority director-general Moshe Tery said the matter was being investigated. *Judy Siegel*

Olim and soldiers light Hanukkah candles

Hundreds of IDF soldiers and immigrants are marking Hanukkah daily at the graves of the Maccabees near Modi'in. Absorption Minister Yuli Edelstein and IDF Chief Chaplain Maj.-Gen. Gad Navon will conduct a joint candle-lighting ceremony at the site tomorrow. *Arieh O'Sullivan*

Charges dropped against 'Ma'atz gang' — after 19 years

By HERDI J. GLEIT

Nearly two decades after the Tel Aviv District Court gave them long prison terms, which they served, four members of the gang known as Moetzet Avaryanim Tze'irim (Council of Young Felons) have been declared innocent, their lawyer, Arie Sharabi, said yesterday.

The State Attorney's Office decided yesterday that it did not have enough evidence to retry gang members Gideon Harari, Ya'acov Balrot, Uri Gulben, and Yosef Rahamin, and therefore dropped all charges against them.

In February 1979, Harari, Balrot, Gulben, Rahamin, and three other men were charged with setting fire to cars, businesses, and warehouses in the Dan region. The Tel Aviv District Court rejected their claims that they had confessed to the crimes because police had tortured them, and sentenced six of the men to three to 10 years' imprisonment.

When three of the men appealed the sentence two years later, one of them was partially exonerated and his prison sentence was shortened.

In September 1994, long after all of the members of the Ma'atz gang had finished serving their sentences, one of the police officers who investigated them told the media that police had indeed tortured the gang members, forcing them to confess. Retired policeman Shi Simhi's confession led Harari, Balrot, Gulben, and Rahamin to appeal to the Supreme Court, which ordered a retrial last April.

However, after several months of gathering evidence, the State Attorney's Office concluded it could not present a case. Many of the records used in the previous trial have gone missing over the past two decades, Deputy State Attorney Yehoshua Lemberger and Nava Ben-Or, head of the State Attorney's Office's crime division, informed the court yesterday.

Furthermore, they noted, Simhi's testimony was very general, as it referred to events which happened nearly two decades ago, adding that Simhi could not recall details about specific incidents. As a result, they decided to drop the charges.

Sharabi said last night that the next step is negotiating with the State Attorney's Office for compensation.

"The state is aware that they should get compensation, because they are not guilty. So now we are entering negotiations with the State Attorney's Office and the court will make a decision in February."

"Each of my clients was in jail for a number of years. Now we have to make a calculation and see how much money the state has to pay my clients."

"If somebody was in jail for six years, he should get a few million shekels. If someone was in jail for three years, he should get about a million," he added.

New Year's Eve parties unbanned

AT THE KNESSET

By LIAT COLLINS, NINA GILBERT and JUDY SIEGEL

Sephardi Chief Rabbi Eliahu Bakshi-Doron has rescinded the ban by the Chief Rabbinate on holding New Year's Eve parties at entertainment halls which have a kosher license.

The decision was praised by MK Yossi Katz, chairman of the Knesset State Control Committee, which was scheduled to discuss the matter today.

Katz said yesterday Bakshi-Doron had changed his mind following two phone conversations with him.

Bill to keep weapons from violent partners

The Committee on the Status of Women will prepare a bill to prevent the return of weapons, confiscated from violent partners, for a five-year period.

Committee chairwoman Marina Solodkin (Yisrael Ba'aliya) made the announcement yesterday at the end of a meeting which discussed the murder of Natalie Goldenberg by her boyfriend, Yefim Rom.

Rom's gun was confiscated in 1996, when he was still married, after two complaints of violence were filed against him by his wife; but it was returned a year later because of his work as a tour guide. He then used it to kill his ex-girlfriend Goldenberg.

Bill for orphans to have two surnames

Fatherless children whose mothers remarry might soon be legally able to carry the surnames of both their deceased biological fathers and their stepfathers.

The bill is being promoted by MK Yona Yahav (Labor), who is married to an IDF widow.

It was approved for first reading yesterday by the Knesset Law Committee, chaired by Hanan Porat (National Religious Party).

Dangerous dog bill

Rottweilers and pit bulls may become more scarce in the country under a bill approved in its first reading that would limit ownership of dogs considered to be dangerous.

The bill, sponsored by Avi Yehzekel (Labor), is to be combined with government legislation being discussed in the Economics Committee for a national dog ownership regulation policy.

Avraham Poraz (Shinui), who heads an animal rights caucus in the Knesset, said the move was "absurd" since it does not deal with the people who do not take care to control their pets.

Calls to deal with water shortages

A plan for dealing with the long-term problems of water shortages must be prepared, the Science and Technology Committee urged yesterday. The committee, headed by MK Michael Nudelman (Yisrael Ba'aliya), demanded that Water Commissioner Zvi Nur see to it that such a plan is prepared.

Former water commissioner Shaul Arlosoroff got into an argument with Water Commission officials over whether there actually is a long-term water crisis, but they all agreed that preparations should be made immediately for desalination of sea water.

Nudelman said that the Water Commission must prepare a long-term plan for the Ministry of National Infrastructure and include practical solutions to desalination as soon as possible. This would be aimed at minimizing the problem of over-pumping from aquifers. The committee also suggested that more work be done in using sub-standard, rather than potable, water for various purposes in agriculture and domestic uses.

Communist lawmaker: Jews guilty of genocide

By GREG MYRE

MOSCOW (AP) — A Communist lawmaker, leading efforts to impeach Boris Yeltsin, yesterday accused the president and Jews in his office of waging "genocide" against the Russian people.

Viktor Ilyukhin, who heads parliament's security affairs committee, became the latest Communist legislator to blame the country's problems on its small Jewish minority.

Ilyukhin and other Communists charged that liberal reforms carried out by Yeltsin's government this decade amounted to a genocide against the Russian people.

"The large-scale genocide wouldn't have been possible if Yeltsin's inner circle had consisted of the main ethnic groups, and not exclusively of one group, the Jews," Ilyukhin told a parliamentary panel that is considering impeachment charges against Yeltsin.

After the session, reporters asked Ilyukhin about his remarks, and he repeated his charges.

"Representatives of one ethnic group have been dominant in the president's inner circle and the government during the past seven years. I have already named this ethnic group," Ilyukhin said.

"It appears to be the cause, or one

of the factors that have contributed to the genocide we have witnessed," he added. "If there had been more representatives of Russia's main ethnic groups, they would have thought more about the consequences for the country."

Yeltsin has frequently reshuffled his advisers over the years. The majority have been ethnic Russians, though Jews and other minority groups have also been represented.

Another Communist lawmaker, Albert Makashov, sparked a major controversy in October when he blamed Russia's problems on "zhidy," or yids, a slur against Jews.

His comments outraged many officials, but the Communist-dominated Duma refused to censure Makashov.

Jews suffered systematic discrimination in czarist Russia and during the Soviet era. The Russian constitution bars discrimination against any group, but many Russians express anti-Semitic sentiments.

Meanwhile, the impeachment panel planned to continue its sessions next week. Several previous impeachment efforts have collapsed, and the current one also has little chance of success.

Yeltsin has vowed to serve out his term until 2000 despite his repeated health problems.

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Blight unto gentiles

In September, Germany's Jewish leader Ignatz Bubis said plans for a controversial Holocaust memorial in Berlin would definitely be dumped if Chancellor Helmut Kohl lost the general election.

Quote: "Either [Helmut] Kohl remains chancellor, or the memorial will not be built."

Not so it seems, proving once more that prophetic pronouncements remain tricky, especially when politically biased. (Bubis is also a member of the Free Democratic Party, the erstwhile junior partner of Kohl's defeated Christian Democrats.)

Only this week, the new government of Gerhard Schröder brought out yet another set of new designs for the most planned but unconstructed monument of all time. Its fate may be no more certain than any of the other aborted suggestions, but it is a refreshing sign that Bubis was wrong and Schröder is not quite the shallow Flash-Harry his opponents painted him.

In fact, the new plan is very promising — it draws a response of "Ah, that's better" from anyone who was appalled by the previous model, on which work was tentatively scheduled to begin in the new year.

Vietnam watch

The new idea, supported by Schröder's culture minister, Michael Naumann, must be debated in parliament before yet another "final decision" is made.

The whole project has dragged on, amid fierce debate and controversy, for 10 years. The memorial must be approved by the federal government, the Berlin city-state government and lobby groups that initiated the project. The three parties agreed this summer to delay a long-awaited decision on the final design until after the September election.

Some designs have seemed feasible, such as one for an imitation of the very successful Vietnam memorial wall in Washington, inscribed with the names of victims. The wall caught the public imagination because, where one name is honored, one person is remembered, and the wall's sea of remembered names can never become a faceless mass.

Helmut Kohl may be a kindly old fellow, but no one ever accused him of having a fine aesthetic sensibility. He rejected a design of a tiled wall inscribed with the names of the Holocaust victims in favor of the concrete pillar-park, which has had more scorn heaped upon it as each day toward building it approaches — a blight unto the gentiles.

Death watch

Naumann's new concept has something the other suggestions have lacked, like taste, life, and — rare indeed — a practical agenda. It would encompass a contemplative garden, libraries and exhibition rooms, and a genocide-

watch institute which would raise alarm bells at any signs of approaching mass murder anywhere.

This last notion is particularly appealing — what better memorial to the victims of genocide than a task force to put action into the "never again" feeling that the memorial is meant to evoke.

Earlier this year, Berlin Mayor Eberhard Diepgen said none of the designs on offer could convey the full horror of the Holocaust. This seemed to signal victory for those who said the monument was ill-conceived in trying to capture what the Holocaust means, and even the best effort will fall short and diminish what it is meant to immortalize.

But others agreed with Kohl, who said it must be done because "this goes to the very core of our self image as a nation."

He said a memorial in a national public place, apart from the death camps memorials, is absolutely vital.

As for the contender that Kohl approved of, it is a maze of 2,700 scattered, concrete pillars to be built on two hectares of open ground near the Brandenburg Gate. That's it.

The proposal conjures up nothing so much as an image of a depressing urban-graffiti wasteland. Depressing we can cope with, if the depression is evoked by a memorial that makes us contemplate the banal fury of man's murderous hatred for man. We can be depressed, as we are in Yad Vashem, by a wasteland of lost lives, lost families, lost communities.

Graffiti park

In the Berlin pillar monument, visitors are likely to be depressed only by the site itself, and what it evolves into. "A wreath-dump," said Naumann. Other insults have included: concrete jungle, graffiti park for neo-nazis, meaningless abstract, monumental disaster, rubbish-strewn wasteland.

Public respect for abstract urban sculptures, never high across Europe, is at an all-time low. It is one thing to tut-tut over the squalid abuse of Yigal Tumarkin's monument in Tel Aviv's Rabin Square. It is quite another to imagine graffiti scrawled on a German national monument to the six million that Hitler murdered — turning a memorial into an insult on a site that was the very heart of the Third Reich.

The pillar-park monument, designed by architect Peter Eisenmann and sculptor Richard Serra, might at first be treated with respect, but its sprawling nature, its cold abstraction and the ennu of time would all take their toll.

From afar, it might be like the Holocaust itself, but without evoking it — its scale too great to be grasped, its labyrinth too abstract to deliver a personal message. Up close, it would be a pillar without a name in a park without a heart.

Column One



Thomas O'Dwyer

Microsoft gets a boost from rivals

Developments in the market are undermining the antitrust case against the software giant

By JUNE SHIVER

The antitrust trial of Microsoft Corp. was supposed to be a swift affair, but instead it has slowed to a crawl while events outside the courtroom appear to be overtaking the landmark case.

The world of high technology, moving at light speed compared to the creaky federal judicial system, has shifted in ways that undermined some of the government's key points in the case and could leave moot the overall allegation that Microsoft used its dominance in the software industry to stifle competition in Internet technologies.

As the case has dragged on, Microsoft's rivals have gained momentum in the marketplace, both by continuing to develop new technology and through mergers that have ratcheted up competition against the industry giant.

The US government, used to antitrust cases that sometimes have plodded on for more than a decade, has never had to deal with such fast-paced events in other high-profile antitrust cases.

"The speed at which this case moves matters tremendously because of the rapid change taking place in the marketplace," said Ernest Gellhorn, a law professor and antitrust expert at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va.

"Technology moves much faster than anything we've ever seen. The America Online and Netscape merger radically changes the (legal) landscape to the disadvantage of the government. It makes their case exceedingly difficult."

In the biggest business trial in this decade, Microsoft is accused of using its dominance in the software industry to promote its own Internet technologies. The Justice Department, 20 states and the District of Columbia filed the suit in May.

Since then, the industry has continued to redefine itself and its relationship to Microsoft.

Last month, for example, America Online Inc. announced a \$4.2 billion bid to acquire Netscape Communications Corp., a deal that is widely seen as weakening the government's contention that Microsoft has thwarted competition in the computer software industry.

An AOL-Netscape combination would be a formidable competitor to Microsoft, making government sanctions seem less urgent.

SIMILARLY, the so-called open source software movement, which is



Microsoft general counsel Bill Neukom disputed the contention of some government lawyers that Microsoft was purposely trying to delay trial proceedings. (AP)

promoting free software such as the Linux operating system as an alternative to Microsoft's Windows, has also gained significant momentum.

Separately, Sun Microsystems said last week that it will relax its control over the Java programming language to speed Java's acceptance as an alternative to Windows.

Earlier this year, Netscape said it will share the source code of its World Wide Web browsing software, essentially making it a public good.

A world awash in free software would certainly pose a threat to Microsoft's dominance.

In addition, Sun and Oracle Corp. are expected to announce Monday that they will work together on a new type of computer that does not require an operating system. If the initiative bears fruit, it could go head-to-head with the software giant's Windows NT operating system, designed for heavy-duty computing.

And next year, the government faces another possible hurdle when Microsoft plans to introduce the fourth generation of its domi-

nant Windows operating system, which could render moot parts of the government's case.

THE prospect of protracted litigation had the US's Justice Department lead trial lawyer David Boies warning last week that he will seek a preliminary injunction to block Microsoft from offering its Windows 2000 operating system if the company brings it to market before the conclusion of the trial.

On top of the industry developments, a lengthy case may also make it difficult for the government to maintain its united front against Microsoft. Last week, the federal and state government attorneys aligned against Microsoft showed signs of strain as South Carolina announced it would pull out of the antitrust case.

US District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson has tried to move the case along, but has frequently encountered resistance from Microsoft lawyers, who have questioned government witnesses at length. As a result, a trial that was expected to last two months is now likely to drag on at least until

spring. The frustration over the pace of the trial erupted last week when Microsoft lawyer Michael Lacovara sought to get extra time to cross-examine a witness he had been questioning for five days. Jackson stormed out of the courtroom, then returned a while later to draw a line in the sand.

"Mr. Lacovara, you will conclude your cross-examination by 5 this evening," Jackson thundered. "This has got to be brought to an end."

THERE is still no end in sight for a trial that's being buffeted by external events that could potentially determine who wins and what kind of penalties might be imposed if Microsoft loses.

To be sure, government lawyers minimize the impact of AOL's acquisition announcement. The deal could just as easily suggest that Netscape faced such overwhelming odds competing against Microsoft that it was forced to give up its independence, government lawyers say.

Some also accuse Microsoft of overstating the competitive challenge posed by the open source code movement. They note that

products such as Linux are still too difficult to use to pose a significant challenge to Windows.

Nevertheless, Boies said he "would have liked to see the trial go faster," adding that he had expected it to last only six to eight weeks.

Government lawyers remain confident that they are putting on a strong case. But they are re-examining what impact, if any, the AOL deal might have on their case.

Indeed, many experts predict the longer the antitrust case drags on, the greater the likelihood other blockbuster deals or sea-changing technologies will emerge, further undermining the government's case.

Microsoft general counsel Bill Neukom acknowledged that his company would have preferred more time to prepare its case. But he said that since Microsoft went on trial October 19, "the pace of the trial has been reasonable." Neukom also disputed the contention of some government lawyers that the software giant was purposely trying to delay trial proceedings.

"We have a right to question their (government) witnesses in detail," Neukom said. (Los Angeles Times)

NY's Republican moderates key to Clinton's fate

By MICHAEL GRUNWALD

Actually, the phones in the Long Island office of Representative Rick Lazio, Rep.-N.Y., were not ringing off the hook Sunday. They were ringing on the hook.

That's because Lazio's district director Barbara Vogel was not answering them. During the workweek, Lazio's entire staff had pulled full-time receptionist duty, and Vogel knew that if she started handling the continuing deluge of calls about impeachment, her day off would be shot.

"It's just too crazy right now," said Vogel, who had stopped by work to drop off some Toys for Tots. "We got 500 calls to this office Friday. It's all anybody's doing."

Lazio is one of the undecideds, one of those previously unheralded Republican moderates who sud-

denly control President Clinton's fate. And with six of those undecided House members hailing from New York, that state is shaping up as the key battleground.

New York is widely viewed as a Democratic state; it was Clinton's second-best in 1992, his third-best in 1996. Moderate Republicans also wield power here, and they have strayed from the GOP line on the Monica Lewinsky mess.

Governor George Pataki, New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and outgoing Senator Alfonse D'Amato all spoke out against impeachment last week, and three of the five declared Republican impeachment opponents in the House are from New York.

Lazio, a third-term congressman who is considering a run for Senate in 2000, has said he will vote his conscience on impeachment regardless of political pressures.

But when New Yorkers have opinions about something, they tend to make those opinions heard. And with the gravity of the president's predicament finally hitting home outside Washington, Babylon, N.Y., felt a bit like its biblical namesake Sunday: plenty of noisy voices, not much common ground.

LAZIO aides said last week's calls ran 60-40 in favor of impeachment, with volume even heavier than it was during the debate over the North American Free Trade Agreement, the previous recalcitrant; interviews Sunday with two dozen residents of Babylon ran about 65-35 the other way.

What was more telling was the intensity of the opinions. And while every voter interviewed thought Lazio was doing a good job for the district, many also said pointedly that they will be watch-

ing his vote, and they will remember in 2000.

From the pulpit of the United Methodist Church, pastor David Randolph urged his parishioners Sunday to call Lazio, describing impeachment as "a murder-suicide pact."

"If Congress stonies this president, they'll be stoning themselves," Randolph said in an interview later. "I have great respect for Rick, but this will be a real test of his courage. I'll be very disappointed if he votes to impeach."

At the rundown Babylon train station for which Lazio recently secured \$1.25 million in modernization money, Joe Timme said he might never forgive Lazio if he votes to keep Clinton in office.

"The guy is guilty! Guilty! Guilty!" shouted Timme, 76, a Republican war veteran who used to run a roofing business. "They

throw those service guys out for sex things? How can you say it's OK for the president? Huh? How?"

Lazio was traveling with Clinton in Israel — by invitation of the House leadership, not the president — and said he won't announce how he will vote until he returns today. He did speak to Clinton briefly aboard Air Force One on Saturday, but the subject of impeachment did not come up.

Nevertheless, he wandered to the back of the plane to tell reporters that Clinton's latest apology had not helped his case, and to urge the president to admit he lied under oath.

SPEAKING Sunday on CNN's "Late Edition," Lazio said: "There's no doubt that the easiest thing would probably be to vote for some kind of censure. But that doesn't make it the right thing. And I shouldn't be doing what's expedient or easy or fulfills some type of ambition. I should be doing what's right, even if it's a difficult vote, even if it means that it adversely affects my career."

Aides say Lazio has not been pressured by the White House, nor by anyone in the New York or national Republican leadership. But both sides of the aisle have been devising a "New York strategy," hoping to sway Lazio and his fellow Empire State undecideds: Michael Forbes, Sue Kelly, Benjamin Gilman, Sherwood Boehlert and John McHugh.

James Walsh, another Republican boldout, announced Saturday that he would vote for impeachment, but Peter King, Jack Quinn and Arno Houghton have announced they will oppose it.

Lazio is fiscally conservative but moderate on social issues. He is in many ways a loyal party man, a deputy Republican whip who pushed hard for capital gains tax cuts and crafted a landmark bill reforming public housing. But he has also supported the Family and Medical Leave act, the Brady bill on gun control, the assault weapons ban and the National Endowment for the Arts, while earning the endorsement of environmental groups like the Sierra Club and the League of Conservation Voters for his shoreline protection work. (Washington Post)

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סלי מן الامم

Fears rise for Kosovo peace plan

By KATARINA KRATOVA

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AP) — US troubleshooter Richard Holbrooke arrived in Serbia yesterday to try to revive the stalled Kosovo peace process, a day after the deadliest clashes in months in the province claimed at least 37 lives.

Detonations heard near the border area with Albania — site of the bloodiest clash Monday — indicated fighting was continuing into a second day.

Holbrooke said the latest bloodshed "will not in any way deter the international community to carry out its obligations" to work for peace in the troubled province.

According to Serb sources in Kosovo, two of five people wounded in a "terrorist attack" on a bar in western Kosovo city of Pec late Monday died overnight.

The news came as Holbrooke arrived in Kosovo, where he met William Walker, head of the OSCE's still-forming mission to verify terms of the Kosovo peace process, and ethnic Albanian leaders.

Later yesterday, Holbrooke was to meet Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic in Belgrade to "emphasize the need to move ahead expeditiously" on a Kosovo peace plan, the State Department said Monday.

Holbrooke and Milosevic brokered the October 12 agreement to end the fighting in Kosovo. The deal averted threatened NATO airstrikes and bought time for diplomats to work out an agreement on the future of the province, where ethnic Albanian rebels are fighting for independence.

Holbrooke said in Pristina that NATO's "activation order is still in place" and that peace "progress must be made because we are con-



US diplomat William Walker (right) recognizes a questioner at a press conference with US Special Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, who arrived in Serbia yesterday to help shore up the peace process, (AP)

cerned that the fighting may flare up."

US-led diplomatic efforts, however, appear stalled, raising fears that the province could explode again into bloody fighting.

On the eve of Holbrooke's visit, the pro-government Serb Media Center said Yugoslav troops killed 31 ethnic Albanian separatists and wounded a dozen others in a five-hour gun battle near the border with Albania, which the guerrillas use as a sanctuary.

Yesterday, detonations and

shooting were heard from the sealed-off area where Yugoslav border guards killed dozens of ethnic Albanian rebels the previous day. Area residents said the Yugoslav army sent armored vehicles and at least one helicopter into the remote area and continued barring anyone from entering.

A peace verifier said it appeared the army was following up on Monday's pre-dawn border clash with a group of authorities said was trying to smuggle arms in from Albania. He said denying the veri-

fiers access violated the October agreement, and that a formal protest will be filed.

Verifiers who hiked to the site Monday said they saw 31 bodies, all wearing camouflage uniforms, lying within a few hundred meters of the border. They said they appeared to be Kosovo Liberation Army fighters ambushed as they tried to bring in guns and grenades.

Holbrooke said "yesterday was not a good day" in Kosovo, but added: "We are determined to continue our effort... We want to tell

all the people involved that they are playing with dynamite."

Walker, who leads the team aimed at ensuring the peace agreement is respected, condemned Monday's violence "in the strongest terms." The clash, he said, "can only lead to a spiral of retribution that will stand in the way of a reasonable political solution much needed in this region."

After two months of failed shuttle diplomacy, chances of mediating an end to the continuing violence in Kosovo seem unlikely.

China puts two dissidents on trial

By JOE McDONALD

BEIJING (AP) — Two months after its highly publicized signing of a key human rights treaty, China is putting two dissident leaders on trial tomorrow in its biggest political crackdown in more than three years.

Veteran activist Qin Yongmin and Wang Youcai, a student leader of 1989 pro-democracy protests, could be imprisoned for life if convicted of subversion for challenging the Communist Party's grip on power by trying to start an opposition party.

The campaign against the China Democracy Party highlights Beijing's determination to crush political challengers, even as it opens up the economy and other facets of Chinese life.

"The battle over changing China politically is a long-term one, and we've had enough thaws over the decades to know that they are always followed by frosts," said Gerald Segal of the International

Institute of Strategic Studies.

The crackdown follows a busy season of high-level diplomacy, including a state visit by President Bill Clinton, regarded by China as mostly successful. With no more major events scheduled, Chinese leaders have a freer hand to crush dissent without fear of repercussions.

The Clinton administration and other Western governments already have dropped links between human rights and trade, and largely stopped criticizing China in the UN Human Rights Commission.

"The US and the West have given up all their material and symbolic sanctions," said Andrew Nathan of Columbia University. "All they have left is verbal intercessions."

The US Embassy in Beijing protested the detentions, but Nathan said, "there was nothing at the political level — at the White House level — in the way of an expression of disapproval."

Wang and Qin are the most prominent dissidents to stand trial since Wang Dan, another former student leader in 1989, was sentenced in 1995 to 11 years in prison on subversion charges.

He was released last April on the condition he go into exile — a tactic used by the Chinese government to rid itself of its most vocal domestic critics.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Sun Yuxi yesterday accused Qin and Wang of committing crimes, but promised Chinese courts would give them a fair trial, free from government interference.

Arrested with Qin on November 30 was Xu Wenli, a veteran dissident who advised China Democracy Party founders. He also is accused of endangering state security, but prosecutors haven't said whether he will be put on trial.

At least 12 other people associated with the party have been detained in various Chinese cities.

Libya agrees to Lockerbie trial plan

By ABDELAZIZ BARROUHI

TUNIS (Reuters) — Libya's top legislative body said yesterday it is satisfied with plans for a trial in a neutral country of two Libyan suspects in the 1988 bombing of a US airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland.

Libyan television said the General People's Congress had also called on the three parties — Libya, Britain, and the United States — to "remove any obstacle" preventing the trial going ahead as soon as possible.

The United States and Britain, which led the way in imposing UN trade sanctions on Libya, have agreed to a trial in the Netherlands.

Britain gave a cautious welcome to yesterday's report.

"If it is true, it is good news. But at the moment it is only a Libyan media report. We have to be circumspect unless and until we have a formal response," a Foreign Office spokesman said.

He said Libya's formal reply would have to come through the office of the UN secretary-general.

In response to the report, Washington reiterated that Libya must hand over the suspects to face trial in the Netherlands.

"Justice has been delayed for almost 10 years in this case. It is time for Libya to meet its obligations," White House spokesman P.J. Crowley said.

The United States and Britain hope to see the suspects handed over before the 10th anniversary of the destruction of the Pan Am airliner, which killed 270 people on December 21, 1988.

The main unsettled issue is where the accused would serve their sentences if convicted. Britain and the United States insist it would have to be in Scotland.

Libyan Foreign Affairs Minister Omar Montasser said his country wants the two suspects to be jailed in Libya, not in Scotland, if found guilty.

Archeologist discovers 'earliest known writing' in Egypt dig

By VIJAY JOSHI

CAIRO (AP) — A German archeologist said yesterday he has found what could be the earliest known writing — records of linen and oil deliveries made about 5,300 years ago during the reign of a king named Scorpion in southern Egypt.

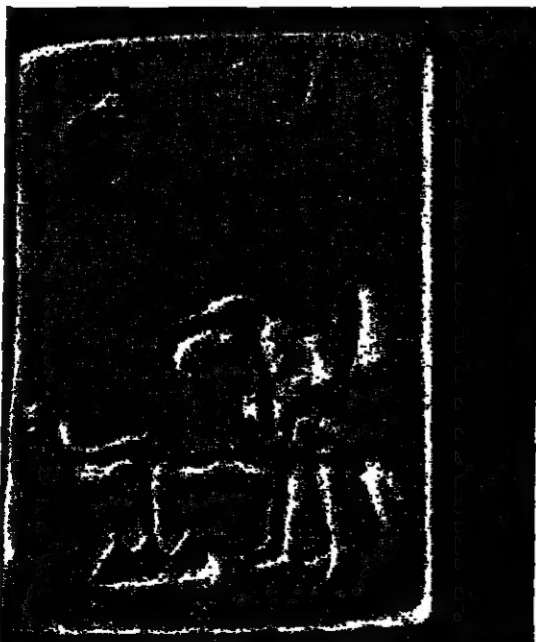
The discovery throws open for debate a widely held belief among historians that the first people to write were the Sumerians, sometime before 3000 BCE.

While the exact date of Sumerian writing remains in doubt, the Egyptian discoveries are carbon dated with certainty to between 3300 BCE and 3200 BCE, Gunter Dreyer, head of the German Archeological Institute, told reporters.

The writings — in the form of line drawings of animals, plants, and mountains — are the first evidence that hieroglyphics used by later-day Pharaonic dynasties did not "rise as Phoenix from the ashes," but developed gradually, Dreyer said.

"Linguists now have a larger history [of writing] to regard," he said. "This would be one of the greatest discoveries in history of writing and ancient Egyptian culture," said Kent Weeks, professor of Egyptology at the American University in Cairo.

Describing Dreyer as a "very meticulous scholar," Weeks said he would not have disclosed his findings without being "absolutely certain." The bulk of Dreyer's discovery was from the tomb of a king called Scorpion in a cemetery in Suhag province, 500 kilometers south of Cairo.



These symbols, representing Mountains of Darkness or west (left tablet) and Mountains of Light or east (right tablet) are said by their discoverer Dr. Gunter Dreyer, who found them in southern Egypt in 1985, to be the oldest example of writing yet found. (AP)

Kings in pre-Pharaonic times used to take names of animals and many records have been found of chiefs named Mouse, Falcon, Double Falcon, and Elephant. The first Pharaonic dynasty began in 2920 BCE with King Menes and the Great Pyramid was not built until nearly 400 years later.

Since 1985, Dreyer and his team have unearthed about 300 pieces of written material on clay tablets barely bigger than postage stamps and clay jars and vases with ink impressions.

deciphered as documentary records of linen and oil delivered to King Scorpion I as taxes, short notes, numbers, lists of kings' names, and names of institutions.

Apart from the academic question of who came first, the Egyptian writings prove that the society then was far more developed than previously thought, Dreyer said.

He said man's first writings were not a creative outpouring but the result of economics: When chiefs expanded their areas of control, they needed to keep a record

of taxes, which in those days were in the form of commodities.

Fish, the word for delivery, appears on many tablets against the names of settlements. For example, the city Ba-set was written with a throne, known as Ba, and a stork, called Set.

Although the Egyptian writings are made up of symbols, they can be called true writing because each symbol stands for a consonant and makes up syllables.

"In principle, they were able to express themselves clearly," Dreyer said.

Algeria names career diplomat new prime minister

ALGIERS (Reuters) — Career diplomat Ismail Hamdani was appointed prime minister by Algerian President Liamine Zerroual yesterday, replacing Ahmed Ouaybia who resigned on Monday, a presidential statement said.

Hamdani, 68, is a career diplomat and a parliament member with long experience in internal policy-making.

"Hamdani took over his duties on Tuesday from Ouaybia," state-run radio said. The two-line statement gave no details about the new cabinet line-up.

Al Khabar daily said Hamdani will keep the outgoing cabinet line-up mostly unchanged, except for the interior, communications, and justice ministers.

Newspapers said Hamdani's task will focus on steering violence-stricken Algeria into a presidential election planned for April to replace Zerroual, who is cutting short his five-year mandate by 19 months.

Le Quotidien d'Oran said Ambassador to Hungary Abdelmalek Sellal will replace Mustapha Benmansour as interior minister, while Abdelaziz Rahabi will be appointed communications and culture minister, replacing Hamroui Habib Chawki.

Ghouti Mekamcha, a law scholar and parliament member, will be justice minister in place of Mohammed Adami, who resigned in November amid malpractice allegations, the newspaper said.

The interior, justice, and communications ministers will directly be involved in preparing and handling the next poll.

NEWS

in brief

Saudi border guard killed by assailants in Iraq

RIYADH (AP) — A Saudi border guard has been shot dead by assailants in Iraq, the official Saudi Press Agency reported yesterday. Saif Ibrahim Jahoush, a guard on the northern border, was on duty when he was shot by assailants in a car on the Iraqi side of the border, the agency said. The agency did not say when the incident took place and gave no other details. It was the first report of violence on the Saudi-Iraqi border since the 1991 Gulf War.

Russian missile chief for START II ratification

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia must ratify the START II arms reduction treaty with the US because its nuclear weapons will soon reach the end of their service life, Gen. Vladimir Yakovlev, commander-in-chief of Russia's Strategic Missile Force, said yesterday. "Just like human life, the lifetime of any piece of equipment is limited," he said at a news conference. "We can only have these weapons on combat duty for 25-27 years." Many of the weapons have already served 21 years, he said.

By 2007, the treaty's deadline for dismantling the weapons, most of Russia's heavy missiles will have to be decommissioned, even if the country doesn't sign the treaty.

START II, which was signed in 1993, would halve Russian and American nuclear arsenals to about 3,500 warheads each.

Iranian students protest murders of 5 writers

TEHERAN (AP) — More than 1,000 university students, protesting a wave of mysterious murders of dissidents, yesterday called for the dismissal of Iran's chief judge and the heads of the intelligence and security services.

Earlier, some 3,000 writers, poets and artists attended the funeral of one of the five slain dissidents, Mohammad Mokhtari, whose body was found on the outskirts of Teheran last week. He had apparently been strangled.

Two dissidents remain missing. Students at a rally at Teheran's Amir Kabir University blamed the hard-line officials for indirectly encouraging violent incidents by not condemning or trying to stop them.

Pinochet lawyers attack law lords ruling

LONDON (Reuters) — A lawyer for Augusto Pinochet yesterday sought to overturn a ruling against the former Chilean dictator by Britain's highest court by claiming that one of the judges had failed to declare a personal involvement.

Five judges sitting in the House of Lords ruled 3-2 on November 25 that Pinochet did not enjoy immunity as a former head of state and as a Chilean senator.

The ruling helped clear the way for legal moves by Spain to extradite him to face charges of murder, torture and kidnapping. Pinochet's lawyer Clare Montgomery objected to the fact that one of the three judges who ruled against Pinochet, Lord Hoffmann, is chairman of the charity arm of Amnesty International and has been a director since 1990.

Croatia indicts WWII commander for war crimes

ZAGREB (Reuters) — Former WWII concentration camp commander Dinko Sakic was yesterday indicted on charges of crimes against humanity. Sakic, 74, has been in custody since June when he was extradited to Croatia from Argentina.

The indictment charges Sakic for crimes allegedly committed between 1942 and 1944 while he commanded the notorious Jasenovac camp and was a deputy commander of another camp at Stara Gradiska.

Sakic is responsible for the death of at least 2,000 people, many of whom he killed personally, the indictment said.

Diana's brother rests after lightning fire drama

CAPE TOWN (Reuters) — Britain's Earl Spencer, brother of the late Princess Diana, and his four children were recovering yesterday after lightning hit their luxury Cape Town home on Monday night, setting fire to the thatched roof.

"He was in the house with the four children and they felt the bolt of lightning and then rushed out and called the fire brigade," Charles Spencer's spokeswoman in London told Reuters. "It looks like half the house has been destroyed."

The spokeswoman said the family had been due to fly back to London for Christmas on Monday night, but had put off the flight until later in the week to recover from the shock.

HEROES OF ISRAEL

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Keep the bank independent

Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel is used to doing battle with the government, a battle which will no doubt continue, given the 1.3 percent inflation rate for November announced yesterday. During his six years in office, Frenkel has contended with much greater pressures than the recent cabinet meeting convened to criticize his last interest-rate hike.

Last week, however, the Knesset Finance Committee took a first step toward a very different sort of battle with Frenkel, one with implications, not just against the policies of one man, but for the institution itself. By a one-vote margin, the Knesset Finance Committee passed a proposal introduced by former finance minister Abraham Shohat that reeks of his long personal vendetta against Frenkel. The Shohat proposal is flawed both in terms of its content and its timing, and does not do justice to the serious task of reforming the law governing one of Israel's most important institutions.

The idea of amending the Bank of Israel Law, which has not been fundamentally rewritten since its passage in 1954, has been under discussion for some time. The bank itself submitted a proposed revision of the law to the government in July 1997 and a special committee, chaired by retired Supreme Court justice Dov Levin, was appointed by the government this year to submit recommendations for a new law to the cabinet. The Levin Committee and the Shohat bill are likely to agree on the centerpiece of the expected reform - the creation of a monetary committee - while they may differ sharply regarding its composition.

Israel is unusual among nations with developed, modern economies in that monetary policy is almost completely centralized in the hands of the governor of the central bank, and that governor does not share power with either a board of governors or a monetary committee. The United States, Switzerland, and Germany all have boards of governors, composed of the bank governors for each region in the nation, who have real influence in determining monetary policy. Countries that are not federations, such as Israel, generally have a monetary committee that performs the same function, of which the bank governor is the first among equals.

There is no argument - even from Frenkel himself - that Israel could use a monetary committee to share his power over interest rates and other tools in the hands of the central bank. Other countries and investors would be astounded, however, if Israel were to require in law that

its monetary committee include members who would undermine the bank's independence. This is what Shohat's bill shamelessly suggests: that one of the five members of the monetary committee be an appointee of the finance minister from the ranks of the Finance Ministry. This would be a blatant violation of the principle of independence of the central bank, and would immediately bring Israel down a few notches in the eyes of global observers of our economy.

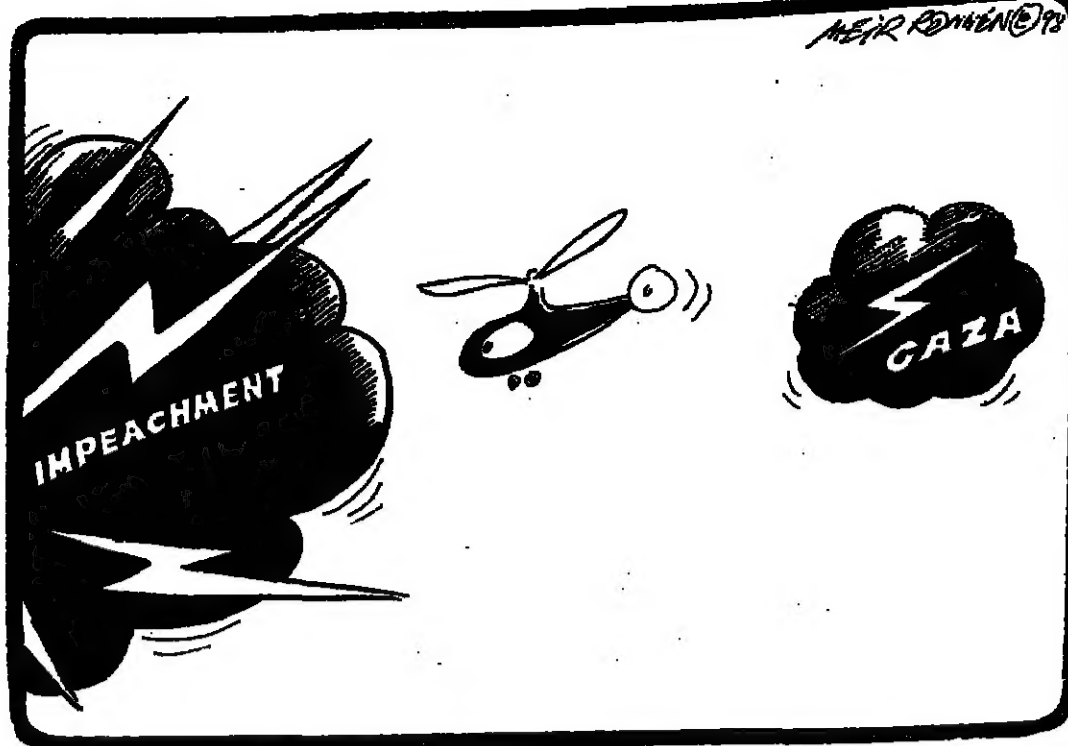
Though to some this might seem a minor bureaucratic nuance, it is worth recalling the larger economic battle between the very different world views of Shohat and Frenkel, of which this is a part. As one of Israel's longest reigning finance ministers, Shohat transformed the \$200 million current-account surplus he inherited into a \$5 billion deficit. Along the way, he tolerated years of double-digit inflation, which he never regarded to be a serious threat to the economy.

Though a better finance minister than some and worse than others, Shohat embodied the classic big-government, inflation-tolerant mindset that has plagued Israel for generations. Frenkel, by contrast, has symbolized the quest to bring Israel into line with other modern economies by lowering inflation and reducing the size of government and the tax burden.

This same conflict is the classic one between central banks and finance ministries in many countries. In every case, the way to protect the economy from the short-term and often politically driven perspective of the Finance Ministry is to jealously guard the central bank's independence.

Cooler minds will no doubt prevail, and the idea of introducing any interested party - whether from the Finance Ministry or the business sector - into the bank will fall by the wayside. But even its suggestion should be an embarrassment to the Knesset and to the Labor Party, for whom Shohat often acts as economic spokesman.

In addition, the new bank law should take into account that the best-functioning central banks focus narrowly upon the only goal that they can influence directly: price stability. Governments and legislatures are always tempted to charge the bank with every economic goal under the sun. But a central bank that tries in the short term to simultaneously spur growth, fight unemployment, and reign in inflation, will succeed at none of these. Frenkel is correct in following the global consensus that price stability is a prerequisite for other economic goals over the long term, and therefore must be the bank's primary goal.



Lessons from Erez

MOSHE ZAK

The commotion is over. Clinton's three days here didn't cause a revolution in the Middle East.

But that wasn't the purpose of the president's visit. His objective was limited: to prevent the collapse of the Wye agreement that he spent nine days and nights in October working to produce.

It was to be expected that as he faced impeachment, he would not allow himself to fail in his mission, and would do everything to breathe life into the agreement, including setting up a three-way meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat.

But as the president and his aides became more deeply involved in the fine details of the Wye agreement, opportunities grew increasingly limited for direct communication between Israel and the Palestinians, which was the basis of the Israeli-Palestinian memo of agreement reached five years ago without American mediation.

It wasn't Israel that abandoned the doctrine of direct negotiation with its neighbors, the doctrine that has guided all Israeli governments. It was the PA that preferred everything to be settled via the Americans, and no longer through direct negotiations with Israel.

Even the Palestinian National Council's authorization of the decision to amend the covenant and delete the clauses calling for the destruction of Israel was worded as an authorization of Arafat's letter to the US president, and not as a message to the Israeli prime minister, as had been agreed in advance when Israel accepted the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people.

This was no mere caprice or carelessness, but a planned move. The PA doesn't hold discussions with Israel but with the Americans, to drive a wedge between Israel and the US.

This is why the Palestinians refused to allow Netanyahu to appear with Clinton at the meeting of the PNC that was held in Gaza to annul the anti-Israeli clauses in the Palestinian Covenant.

In the same fashion, the Americans had to pressure the PA to allow Industry and Trade

Minister Natan Sharansky to participate in the opening of the Karmi industrial park on the border of the Gaza Strip, even though Israel has invested \$7 million in its establishment, as part of its economic assistance to the PA.

The PA trade and industry minister's opposition to Sharansky's participation was not personal, but on principle: the PA's guiding policy today is to limit public cooperation with Israel as much as possible.

Thus, they were delighted to welcome US Commerce Secretary

Clinton failed to build a bridge between Israel and the PA

William Daley, but didn't want Sharansky. Only when Daley made it clear that without Sharansky he would not attend did the Palestinians give in.

Sharansky was there, and spoke at the ceremony, emphasizing the Israeli aid in establishing the park, and promising continued assistance in its development.

This episode isn't the only expression of the Palestinians' efforts to keep their distance.

They were supposed to reduce the number of Palestinian policemen and submit a list of those serving in it to Israel. But the PA insisted that they wouldn't make the report to Israel, but to the Americans. As for the rounding up of illegal weapons, the Palestinians also refused to report to Israel, but only to the Americans.

THIS is how the PA bars the development of direct Israeli-Palestinian relations. It limits direct contacts to the bare minimum, to times when it has no alternative - for example, in the discussions on the Gaza port or safe passage from Gaza to Hebron.

In this, the PA is taking the same approach as Egypt, which also tries to reduce its contact with Israeli officials to a minimum, even though the peace treaty

between Israel and Egypt calls for the normalization of relations.

A symposium held last week at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, marking the 20th anniversary of the Camp David Accords, was attended by Americans who had participated in the Camp David summit, and also by Egyptians and Palestinians. One of them, was Salah Bassiouni, a leader of the Egyptian peace movement, who has served as his country's ambassador to the UN and Moscow.

This mild-mannered diplomat claimed in his speech that the preferential aid that the US grants to Israel above what it grants to Egypt is harmful to the peace process, and called on the US to maintain equality in the aid it gives to Israel and Egypt.

This forceful statement by a leader of the peace movement was no surprise: This is the official position of his friend, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa.

But the leader of the Egyptian peace movement also avoided a meeting with Netanyahu attended by all the participants at the Beersheba symposium. After a meeting with Arafat in Hebron, the Egyptian diplomat got off the bus that was taking the group to Jerusalem.

The Palestinians want to follow Egypt's lead, but for the time being, they are unable to boycott every meeting with Israelis. And when the US president particularly wants Arafat to meet Netanyahu at the Erez checkpoint, Arafat turns up so as not to embarrass Clinton, who has enough troubles of his own.

But the temporary success in putting out the fire only perpetuates the flammable situation. The setting up of American mechanisms to supervise the implementation of the Wye agreement also erects walls between Israel and the Palestinians.

President Clinton succeeded in bringing Netanyahu and Arafat together at Erez, but he could not build a bridge between them based on the mistaken symmetry between children of murdered parents and children of murderers. The Palestinians consider it a wall protecting their demands rather than a bridge linking them to Israel.

Stomp out national pride

DAVID NEWMAN

We may celebrate our modern independence on Yom Ha'atzmaut. But in religious/cultural terms, it is Hanukka which is the real festival of national independence. It is not only about the military victory of the Maccabees but, perhaps even more importantly, the victory of a proud nation's culture and beliefs over attempts to replace them with alternatives.

It is a lesson we would do well to remember at a time when the government, and its political supporters, appear to be doing everything to undermine the contemporary manifestations of this same national pride.

Take for example the proposal to transform Russian into Israel's third official language. No other immigrant group has, in the past, attempted to assert its newly found electoral power in such a way as to ridicule the whole notion of a Jewish state speaking its own language.

This is a blatant attempt to dilute the renaissance language of a modern state by groups who are unprepared to make the effort to fully integrate into their new society.

In its desire to retain power at all costs, the government is prepared to consider this proposal even if it means giving in to the political machinations of former hero-turned-political-fox Natan Sharansky, and that political jack-of-all-trades, Avigdor Lieberman, in their attempts to even further fragment Israel into a multitude of sectoral and ethnic interest groups.

The government bill aimed at taxing all foreign assets, including pensions, of Western immigrants to Israel, is a similar assault on those who took their national pride and made it a living reality.

Forget about taxing speculative earnings from the stock market or

Our government is missing the message of Hanukka

the gambling gains from the Jericho casino. It's much easier to pick on those suckers who were stupid enough to make aliya of their own accord.

Who cares any longer about aliya? Certainly not a government which, by passing this tax law, will dry up the little Western aliya that still exists and will probably drive many of those who have already decided to live here, often at considerable cost to themselves and their families, back to the feshpots of North America and Western Europe.

THERE has probably never been a government in Israel's history which has even considered undertaking measures that contrast so strongly with the very essence of Zionism as an ideology of state formation.

Its members may call themselves the "national" camp and they may pretend to be more patriotic than the Left, but the sad reality is that the current government's policies are an antithesis to everything Zionism stands for.

It is a government in which non-Zionist haredi parties can dictate social and cultural policy to a majority population that does not share their values or beliefs.

It is a government whose members can propose that Israelis living abroad be allowed to participate in national elections, to ensure that the "national" camp (which, so it would appear, most of the voluntary exiles support) will retain its narrow majority.

It is a government whose notions of social justice are such that students, after having served for three years in the army, are denied tuition assistance, and whose privatization mania has led to the largest-ever economic gap between the "haves" and "have nots" of Israeli society.

And it is a government which, given the chance to make peace, is prepared to sacrifice future security and stability on the altar of territorial irredentism professed by a small minority of the population.

Hanukka celebrates the victory of the spirit of nationhood over those who would deny us physical and spiritual independence and sovereignty. The physical sovereignty of contemporary Israel is no longer in question. But its spirit is up for grabs.

Based on its recent policy initiatives, it would appear that Israel's present government cares little for the national spirit of Zionism. All it cares about is holding on to power.

If this government is unable to do better than this, it is time we had another one.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

STRATEGIC ERROR

Sir, - If any hopes remained on the Right that the establishment of a Palestinian state is not inevitable, they have been dispelled, thanks to the prime minister's colossal strategic error.

The fact of President Clinton's visit to Gaza, whether due to omission or commission by Benjamin Netanyahu, has become the Palestinians' Balfour declaration.

Shimon Peres could not have done it better.

DAVID LITKE

Elazar.

MITSUBISHI AND WHALES

Sir, - This letter is in response to D'vora Ben Shaul's article "Fighting Mitsubishi for the whales" (November 22), on the proposed salt project in San Ignacio Lagoon.

We are concerned that your readers have been given an inaccurate and exceptionally uninformed view of the issues your correspondent purports to cover.

Specifically, she cites unnamed experts who claim that a proposed solar salt evaporation project in San Ignacio Lagoon would destroy all plant and animal life there. We are not surprised that no sources are named in the article since there is no expert in the world who would make such a claim.

Why? Because for decades Exportadora de Sal (ESSA), a joint venture between the Mexican government and Mitsubishi Corporation has run a similar solar salt facility in the whale sanctuary 150 miles to the north of San Ignacio. This existing salt facility is also in a whale sanctuary.

Far from seeing whales or plant

and animal life disappear, whales have come in increasing number to the Guerrero Negro site - and roughly 110 species of birds are found there. In short, 40 years of direct evidence proves conclusively that the claims made in the article are not even remotely possible.

If your correspondent had bothered to contact ESSA, the Mexican government or Mitsubishi Corporation, or do any real research, she would have learned that we have taken a reasonable, balanced approach to ensure the project would not harm the environment.

While there are too many inaccuracies in her story to recount in a brief letter, it should suffice to say that no one who has looked into this issue has ever before made such baseless claims.

STEPHEN WECHSELBLATT
Vice President,
Mitsubishi
International Corporation.

New York.

D'vora Ben Shaul comments:

I find it the height of cynicism that Mitsubishi has chosen to cite the record of their salt works Exportadora de Sal, north of San Ignacio. Just one year ago, fishermen in Baja found almost 100 black sea turtles floating dead in the waters of Ojo de Liebre.

Officials, at the request of the attorney-general of Mexico investigated the incident, and in July 1998 issued a report stating that the cause of death was a spill of toxic salt-brine waste into the lagoon.

In the same report the commission of inquiry stated that in May 1997, there had been another spill of millions of gallons of toxic brine that had killed large populations of fish.

Any such spill while the nursing whale cows and their pups are in residence would be disastrous. There is no reasonable justification for locating such projects in ecologically vulnerable sea-animal sanctuaries when there are plenty of other places where salt can be harvested.

disengagement took place and peace negotiations began. Reserves would stay mobilized, but would get more pay and leave.

An Israeli soldier was killed near Suez and there were frequent Egyptian and Syrian violations of the cease-fire.

Alexander Zvielli

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

50 years ago: On December 16, 1948, The Palestine Post reported that the UN Security Council had postponed the vote on Israel's bid for UN membership in response to France's request to defer discussion.

Israel published a list of British arms which had reached Arab hands during the last truce in direct vio-

lation of the Security Council's orders.

25 years ago: On December 16, 1973, The Jerusalem Post reported that according to Chief of Staff David Elazar, Israel's armed forces planned to maintain a high state of preparedness along the cease-fire lines until a genuine

سكنا من الارامل

When foster kids can't beat the demon

As more and more US adoptive parents confront dangerous and uncontrollable behavior, they are fighting the states that refused to give them information on the children they took in, Barbara Vobejda reports



Wrongful adoption? Tracy and Bill on the day they adopted Billy, 10. Now 14, he is in a treatment center. (The Washington Post)

No one knows what triggered his rage on the chilly autumn evening two years ago when 12-year-old Billy McClellan torqued himself into an uncontrolled frenzy, beat his younger brother to the ground, punched his fist into a wooden china cabinet and cornered his foster sister against the kitchen counter, a butcher knife aimed at her chest.

"Help me," she pleaded to the stunned babysitter.

It took two police officers to carry Billy to the patrol car. "I'll get you for this," he screamed at them.

Tracy McClellan, who had received a panicked call on her cellular phone, screamed into the driveway in time to watch her son being hauled away, kicking at the car windows.

That day, she thinks now, "was the beginning of the end," when she first wondered whether she and her husband had made a mistake in adopting Billy.

They knew he'd been abused, that he'd been shuffled in and out of foster homes. But they hadn't seen his full records, couldn't have imagined all the cruelties buried in his past.

They went ahead and, like tens of thousands of other US families each year, plucked a child out of the nation's foster care system. But the charming and troubled youngster they'd taken in at 9 had, by 12, turned uncontrollably dangerous.

It wasn't just the knife. Billy was getting in fights at school, had been written up by the principal for making sexual gestures with a carrot in his mouth and had followed home a girl in his class, threatening to break in and hurt her.

Eventually, everyone agreed he'd be better off out of the house. County officials took custody of Billy and put him in a treatment center two hours from home. Then they did something that struck the McClellans as grossly unfair: They charged the family \$534 a month to help pay for Billy's treatment.

Now, unknown to their 14-year-old son, Bill and Tracy McClellan have been twisting around an inconceivable decision: Should they keep him, while the other kids in the house lock their bedroom doors at night in fear? Should they just hope he doesn't kill someone? Pay the cost of the treatment, even as the mortgage goes unpaid? Or should they give Billy back to the government? Push one child out to save the others, then live with the loss and the guilt?

Tracy sits at her home computer, pounding out her frustration. "Adoptive parents BEWARE!" she typed recently, beaming the message to anyone in cyberspace willing to listen. "Are you a lamb being led to slaughter, as we were?"

THE question of precisely what the McClellans did and didn't know when they adopted Billy is crucial now, not just to them, but as a warning of what can go wrong as America embarks on a historic change in the adoption of foster children.

This year states began making an unprecedented effort to find adoptive parents for 100,000 children taken from abusive or neglectful

parents, spurred by federal legislation enacted a year ago this month aimed at doubling the number of these placements. But that new push has raised concern among adoption experts that agencies, eager to find permanent homes for more children, won't go far enough in disclosing all the details of a child's past. Just as crucial, they say, is making sure parents understand that a history of abuse and neglect can resurface years later in ways they may not be prepared to handle.

Already, those who follow the phenomenon say an increasing number of families are filing and winning "wrongful adoption" lawsuits, claiming that critical information was withheld and they were later hit with huge, unexpected costs for medical or psychological treatment for their children.

No one has tracked the precise number of these suits, but since the first case was decided in Ohio in 1986, state after state has begun recognizing wrongful adoption as a legitimate reason to sue.

That has put growing pressure on states and adoption agencies to turn over more information to parents than they did in the past.

"How can parents fulfill their parental responsibility with their hands tied behind their back?" said Judith Ashton, executive director of a New York coalition of adoptive and foster families that is pushing for more disclosure.

At least half the states have some legal requirement to provide information to families, but the policies vary widely. The final decision on how much information on a child's background to hand over to parents often ends up being made by individual counties and agencies. States and counties also vary in their treatment of families who want to relinquish a child they have adopted out of foster care, in some cases refusing to allow the adoption to be ended unless forced to do so by a judge's order.

The push to increase adoptions is bolstered by new financial incentives. In the past, states received more money for keeping a child in foster care than for placement with an adoptive family. Under the new law, the federal government will pay states \$4,000 to \$6,000 for each child who is adopted.

This pressure, said Ashton, creates a "kind of time bomb," a growing number of families who may be recruited without all the information, training and support they need to raise children damaged by their histories.

"These are needy kids," she said. "How many are going to end up back in the system?"

FROM the pages of the family photo album, 10-year-old Billy smiles on adoption day: His hair is combed neatly to the side and he is scrubbed clean in a striped shirt and tie, a serene look spread across his face.

Tracy and Bill made invitations to the party on their home computer. They gathered the relatives, served up sloppy joes and dove into a big white cake with a message written in red frosting: "Our family grew. We used to be two. Thanks for adopting us, Billy."

Bill and Tracy had met their new son a year earlier, when he was 9—

a handsome, olive-skinned boy with thick, wavy black hair and dark brown eyes. When they saw him, they were charmed.

They found him through his caseworker and brought him home in August 1993, just two days after they had been approved by the county to be foster parents. They knew he'd had a difficult past, but they also knew he was the boy they wanted to adopt.

"We were so excited we couldn't stand it," said Tracy. "We bought him a new bed. We let him pick out the bedspread. We got him new clothes."

The McClellans were each on their second marriage. Neither had children, so after they married they decided they would take in foster children with the hope of adopting.

Billy was the first child they brought home.

He clearly had behavior problems, but the McClellans decided they were manageable, and after waiting the required six months, they filed papers to begin adoption.

But several months later, when the final documents went before Jane Lucal, a now-retired Erie County judge, she refused to sign, arguing that the McClellans hadn't been given enough information about their son's past.

The McClellans had asked for Billy's file, they said, but were told by Erie County that the records couldn't be found.

Prompted by the judge's concerns, the McClellans say, the county gave them a three-page document, a single-spaced summary of the horrors that had punctuated Billy's past: a shattered thigh bone at age 2, burns and bruises all over his body at age 4. He had tried to set the house on fire at a previous foster home.

And they could see from his records that child protection workers had moved him more than a dozen times among various foster families and his birth parents. He'd been taken twice from his mother and stepfather because of abuse, placed with his father and step-

mother, then removed again.

One foster family had planned to adopt him, then decided against it. The McClellans were not deterred. "I thought love conquers all," Bill said.

Lucal said in an interview that she agreed to sign the papers, but urged the family to keep pushing for more information. They said they did, monthly at first, but received nothing more from the county.

THE McClellans entered this new stage of life enthusiastically. Both were college-educated and had good jobs, Bill as a manager in a manufacturing plant and Tracy as a teacher. They loved their quiet Midwestern town of 8,000, set among the corn fields an hour west of Cleveland. And they bought a huge old yellow Victorian on Main Street, with four bedrooms upstairs, a wide porch and tall trees in the yard. It was a perfect place for kids.

Before long, Bill and Tracy's

house filled up with a family. Less than a year after Billy arrived, they took in Brendan to adopt, a 7-year-old boy with a severe hearing impairment. And over the next five years, they opened their doors to many foster children. When their children turned 18, and the subsidy payments ended, the McClellans let the kids stay on. Several would become part of what they considered their loose-knit, permanent family, which also included seven dogs, four cats, a cockatoo, a hedgehog, a salamander and a pet rat.

At first, Billy would smash his plastic toys and break windows or furniture when he was angry. At school, he would get in fights with other children and yell at the teachers. When he was 9, he drew a picture with stick figures engaged in oral and anal sex.

Jarred by the drawing, the McClellans asked Erie County again for his records. But they said county officials put them off, saying there was nothing more they could send.

In the meantime, Billy was seeing a counselor and a psychiatrist often, sometimes twice a week, and the sessions seemed to be helping. Slowly, his rawest anger seemed to be draining away. The adults at school warmed up to him, found him engaging, and visits to the counselor dropped to once a month. Getting the records seemed less important. The McClellans relaxed.

But the period of calm ended. When Billy turned 12, he became more defiant and aggressive, a pattern psychologists say is common among abused children as they approach adolescence. Bill and Tracy would tell him to do his chores and he would refuse, flying into a tirade. Once more, he was picking fights at school.

At first, his parents relied on the staples of modern discipline, "time-outs" in the corner, praising the positive. But it wasn't working with Billy anymore. So Bill decided to try something he'd read in *Psychology Today*.

When Billy acted up, he'd get baby food for dinner. It was the same food the rest of the family was eating, but his was ground up in the blender until it turned to mush.

Then, to remind Billy of the diet awaiting him if he misbehaved, Bill taped a photo of a plate and silverware to his desk at school, and asked the teacher to point to it when Billy acted up. "It slowed him down, but it didn't stop him," Bill said.

NONE of their disciplining techniques seemed to have much effect, and soon it was the family's lives that seemed in danger.

On one occasion, Tracy looked out the front window to see Billy pushing his little brother in front of a steady stream of traffic. Brendan struggling to break free. Tracy screamed, but Billy didn't stop until she ran out and grabbed Brendan. It was right around this time that Billy threatened his foster sister with the butcher knife.

For a few weeks, he was put in a detention home, and then a hospital psychiatric unit. But soon he was back home and in trouble again. Tracy sent him to the "time-

out" corner for hitting Brendan. Only this time Billy started banging his head on the wall. He turned and grabbed his mother. Flipped her on her back on the dining room floor, put his hands around her neck and choked her.

That string of incidents was the breaking point that ultimately landed Billy where he is today: in a residential treatment facility 128 miles from his home.

Shortly after Billy was moved out of the house, in February 1997, the McClellans said, they finally received an inch-thick binder filled with his records.

In that pile of papers were reports from caseworkers and counselors making clear that Billy's abuse and subsequent problems went far further than they had imagined. It contained a second summary with details omitted from the version they had seen before adoption: that a rectal exam when Billy was 4 indicated he may have been raped; that he had attempted to hang a family dog; that he had tried to fondle girls' breasts and buttocks at one of his foster homes; that he ate dirt.

The report closed with a warning: "Billy is a very troubled child and is in need of structure, close supervision and counseling."

WHILE his future is debated halfway across the state, Billy sits drugged and unaware at his treatment center.

Billy has been labeled with various diagnoses: attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, attachment disorder, bipolar disorder. And his records show his doctors are trying any number of medications to calm his inner demons. In addition to lithium, he's taken Ritalin and Adderall for hyperactivity, Prozac and Desipramine for depression.

The center "is helping me manage my anger," Billy said during a recent visit with his father, mimicking the treatment vernacular. But, he also added, "there's nothing good here." Billy is unsure about his future. His parents, he says, are "normal people. They do normal things. When I was good, I fit in." But now he doesn't know.

Two days before Bill's visit, Billy sent a letter home, scrawled in pencil on three-ring binder paper.

When she saw her son's handwriting, Tracy hoped for signs of progress, and rushed to read it aloud to Billy's grandparents, who were visiting. But when she saw his words she had to suck in her breath and run off, then cry by herself at her dining room table.

"I don't give a (expletive) about you no more, so (expletive) off bitch," he wrote. Tracy took a few hours to calm down before she went to her computer to compose her own letter.

"I sincerely hope that in the years to come you will learn to be a happy person," she typed. "I truly believe that somewhere inside is my son, Billy. I would love to give him a big hug... Just remember, I do love you and I always will. Love, Mom."

Then she settled back at the dining room table with her pack of cigarettes and a box of Kleenex, debating in her head once again whether to give Billy up.

(The Washington Post)

How parents can get out more



By Ruth Mason

How often have you told yourself that you and your spouse need to go out more? How many of you new parents hesitate to trust your baby to the care of a stranger or your teenage neighbor?

And how many of you stay home because the expense of a baby-sitter is one you'd like to avoid?

All these obstacles to going out and enjoying yourself as a couple can be overcome by a baby-sitting co-op.

Quite popular in the US, baby-sitting co-ops are groups of parents who trade baby-sitting services with one another. No money changes hands.

Co-ops provide a steady pool of known and experienced baby-sitters at a price you can't beat. (They're also a good way for new parents to meet other parents.)

Here are some tips for setting up a co-op:

1. Start with a small number of families who know each other from childbirth preparation class, playground, day care center, neighborhood, synagogue, etc. Expand to include friends of the initial members. That way everyone comes

with a recommendation, and you start with a level of trust.

2. Have a meeting so co-op members can get to know each other and go over mutually agreed-upon ground rules. Circulate a list of names, addresses, phone numbers, names and ages of children and baby-sitting availability.

You can either appoint a "secretary" who rotates every six months, or allow members to make their own informal arrangements. Meet every six months or so to discuss how things are going.

3. Decide on some kind of "currency" to be exchanged. You can use slips of sturdy paper, 10-agarot pieces painted with red nail polish, or whatever else you come up with. Each "token" is worth one half-hour of baby-sitting time, and each family gets 40 of them when they join the co-op.

When you babysit you earn tokens, and when someone babysits for you, you pay with them. Theoretically, each family will sit the number of hours they get sat for.

4. Decide together on the rules you want to follow, but keep in mind the rules that have worked for successful co-ops:

• No one is obligated to accept a request to baby-sit.

• Baby-sitting is done at the home of the sitter during daytime hours, and at the home of the child during evening hours. In the case of infants, it might be just as easy to bring him or her to the home of the sitter during the evening as well.

• If the sitter cancels within 24 hours of the appointed sitting time, s/he is obligated to find a substitute from within the co-op or pay for a sitter. If the parents cancel within 24



Feeding time's a joy, but new parents need time out of the house to recharge their batteries. (Sarit Uziel)

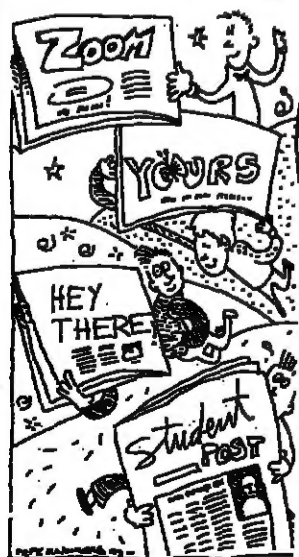
hours, they are required to pay the sitter for one hour of baby-sitting time.

In addition to free, reliable childcare and more fun in your life, you will find another advantage to the baby-sitting co-op.

Once your charges are asleep, you get the gift of quiet time away from your own obligations at home to catch up on reading, letter-writing, or just being by yourself — something all parents know is as precious as gold.

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Corner



By Batsheva Mink

No matter how much one reads about gardening, it may be that experience is still the best teacher. I have learned from experience that each year, when the season is over, I feel a sense of failure because certain plants did not live up to expectations.

This summer has been particularly unkind to plants, many of which shriveled up in the heat and failed to flower.

Getting rid of a plant that has failed to flower is often easier said than done. If it was expensive or given to you as a present, you are probably very reluctant to part with it. You may even have devoted time and attention to it for a year or two.

I receive many letters asking why plants fail to flower.

The most common reasons are immaturity, starved soil, exposed location, lack of sun, incorrect pruning or, in the case of many fruit trees, a late frost.

If a plant has never flowered, it may be for more than one reason – or it may be a dud, and the best course of action is to replace it. On the other hand, it may need a little longer to mature.

Knowing what went wrong can prevent us from making the same mistakes again.

The following list is to help you pinpoint the most likely cause and outline the steps you need to take to put things right. My list is based on the usual plants that can be problematic, plants that have never flowered, or skipped one or two years of flowering.

Bird of Paradise (*Strelitzia reginae*, Heb. *strelitzia hamalka*). This exotic South African native flowers only when it is mature – which can be anything from five to eight years. If grown from seed it needs nine to 10 years before blooming well.

If it is grown in a pot, make sure the pot is not too large for the plant as it prefers being pot-bound (having its roots confined). Only when the pots are jammed full with roots is it time to repot to a pot one size bigger.

It needs plenty of water during the growing season, but keep it fairly dry during the wintertime. A southern exposure that can be lightly screened during the very hot summer days is ideal. Feed with a liquid fertilizer every 14 days from March to September.

Camellia japonica (Heb. *camellia yapanis*). If camellias run short of water in July, August or

So painful when plants fail to flower

September, they tend to abort (drop) their flower buds in the winter. If this happens, it is usually too late to do anything about it. You may have to miss one flowering year.

Keep regularly watered during the summer. A layer of organic matter (mulch), such as compost, peat moss or rotted leaves spread on the soil surface helps to conserve moisture, adds nutrients and suppresses weeds.

As camellias flower during the winter months, a sharp frost can cause the buds to turn brown and shrivel. Rain also spoils the blossoms.

On the other hand, your plant may not be getting enough sun. It needs dappled sunlight to flower well.

Daffodil (Heb. *narkiss*). Reduction of flowering displays is a common problem with daffodils and is usually the result of planting too close to the surface or overcrowding.

To remedy this, lift and replant the bulbs in autumn, 10-15 cm. apart with a 10-cm. covering of soil. Make sure the leaves die down naturally to help build up the bulbs for the following year.

If you must dig them up before they have completed their life cycle, replant in another spot and feed them with diluted liquid seaweed, sprayed onto the leaves.

Magnolia grandiflora (Heb. *magnolia gedolat prahim*). This is one of the most spectacular trees in the world with some of the largest fragrant flowers.

For gardeners who have patience, the rewards are great. If the trees are raised from seed, which is the simplest method of propagation, they are unlikely to flower for at least 10 or 15 years.

Make sure the tree is planted in full sun and that it does not run short of water during the summer. Feed once a month or mulch with compost.

Try to avoid pruning during the first 10 years of growth.

Wax plant (*Hoya speciosa*, Heb. *batsheva*). The hoyo plant needs plenty of filtered light. Its preference for high humidity makes the kitchen a good location. It requires a well-drained soil mixed with plenty of peat moss (Heb. *kavul*), coarse sand and volcanic rock (Heb. *loof*).

Keep the plant potbound and let the soil go dry between waterings. Feed with a liquid plant food once a month.

Avoid cutting out the old wood: it is on this that flower spurs are formed.

African violets (*Saintpaulia ionantha*, Heb. *santpaulia afrikani*). To get these popular house-



plants to flower again they must be given enough light.

Sometimes African violets refuse to bloom if the air is too dry. Misting is usually not recommended for hairy-leaved plants. The alternative is to place the plant on pebble-filled trays of water, resting the pot bottoms on the stones, not directly in the water.

A humidifier can be placed in the room, or the plants can be covered at night with clear plastic.

Overcrowding is another reason why the plants may refuse to flower. Repot in the spring.

Gladioli (Heb. *seifan*). Gladioli left in the ground after flowering produce little offsets known as cormlets. In other words, the original corm that you planted will be producing many smaller corms.

These take over the role of the mother plant. But they take two years to reach flowering size and in the meantime a few blades of grass are all you are likely to see.

If you lift the corms each year, you can remove the smaller cormlets and ensure at least yearly flowering from the larger ones.

A virus infection is another reason why gladioli may not flower. Destroy any plants with yellow streaks or spots on their leaves.

Amaryllis (*Hippeastrum hybrid*, Heb. *hippeastrum*). Getting one of these to flower again can be difficult. From the time the flowers fade until the resting period is the important time.

A sunny position is required. Feed every two weeks with a liquid fertilizer. From November keep them dry. Start watering in March, or earlier if in a warm place.

Christmas Cactus (*Schlumbergera buckleyi*, Heb. *schlumbergera*) is a plant that produces buds only when the days become shorter (photoperiodism).

If you keep your plant indoors during autumn and early winter,



(Above, right) The exotic bird of paradise flowers only when it is mature – which can be anything from five to eight years; (left) gladioli 'cormlets' take over the mother plant's role but need two years to reach flowering size; (Top) amaryllis needs sunlight and liquid fertilizer feeds every two weeks.

it may be getting too much artificial light in the evenings, which prevents the formation of the buds. Also plants growing outside can be affected by street lighting.

From September onwards, the plant should be in a warm, dark place in the evenings. If you delay giving it natural light on the short

days, it will take longer to form flower buds.

Batsheva Mink is a curator of the Jerusalem Botanical Gardens, Giv'at Ram.

Your gardening questions and comments are welcome. Contact Batsheva Mink, POB 3943, Jerusalem 91039.

TIP OF THE WEEK

To keep birds out of the garden, tie a few lengths of black cotton thread (nothing stronger) up sticks about 30-50 cm above your plant ed-beds. The birds will bump into the thread, which they cannot see. It is harmless, and the birds soon learn to stay away.

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• Attorney Menachem Yansovsky , Legal Advisor of the Rabbinate, "Human Rights in Israeli Law"	

Heads 'N' Tails



By Dvora Ben Shaul

A reader of this column asks if dogs do things out of jealousy, or from sheer spite.

She writes: "I have a standard poodle that I got shortly before my daughter left for university. Now every time she comes home the dog immediately does something terrible – urinates in the house, tears up clothing etc. What can I do?"

My own feeling about this, based on years of experience with dogs, is that some do act out of jealousy – and when they do, it is hard to miss.

While we try very hard not to anthropomorphize – that is, to read human emotions and motives into animal behavior – sometimes the situation is so blatantly expressed that it is hard not to draw conclusions.

When we lived in the country, I once had a German shepherd bitch who often wandered about for hours. Sometimes when I was ready to lock up for the night and she had not yet appeared, I would simply leave her out. After all, she had a comfortable bed on an enclosed porch.

But whenever the dog found herself locked out, she would quite deliberately strew all the contents of the garbage bin over the lawn and porch. She never did this when the door was open, even though she often opted to sleep on the porch.

I was forced to conclude that the raid on the garbage bin was her way of expressing displeasure over being shut out.

In the case of our reader, I would guess that the dog may not be getting its usual quota of attention when the daughter comes home, and that this is the poodle's way of attracting it.

As far as jealousy is concerned, animal reactions are not usually so

Dogs that damage out of 'spite'



much the "me and me alone" kind, but more of a "me-too" attitude. It would be a good idea for this reader to give the dog a little more attention when the girl comes home.

It would be especially helpful for the daughter to develop a good relationship with the dog – taking it out for a walk, for instance, or a romp in the park, alone because that is what the dog is used to.

One must remember that urinary marking of territory is a very basic canine instinct: the dog may be telling the daughter whose house it is! But this case is mild compared to some I have seen.

A young bachelor doctor I once knew could not bring a woman guest into the house without expecting his male poodle to damage drapes and upholstery, clothing and even his record collection.

When he finally married, a war of attrition went on for months.

Some dogs don't do any physical damage to property but simply sulk, refusing to come to their owners after a bath or after being like.

Is this real "sulking," or is the dog just feeling insecure? It's hard to say – but if it isn't sulking, it's a pretty good imitation.

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סוכן מן הארץ

New plays in Old Jaffa

By HELEN KAYE

Fringe is part of the Israeli cultural landscape these days, but it wasn't when Niko Nitai established the Simta Theater in Old Jaffa 16 years ago. He inaugurated the Original Play Festival not long after, and it's been going ever since. It presents new Israeli plays, by mostly young playwrights, on a variety of themes, but "the connection with Israeli reality is a constant," he says.

This year's festival from December 23 to 26 is the 13th, with five productions and three staged readings chosen from among the 60 ideas or scripts submitted. The readings, all works in progress, range from the conflict in Israel to Arab faces when he returns to the place he was born, to the story of an artist who creates what he believes to be apocalyptic artwork.

David Lifschitz is only 23, but the 1997 Acre Festival accepted his play *Fricassee*. (He has also written scripts for TV.) His *Down Town*, directed by Jack Messenger, confronts the problem of unemployment, "and questions a world that seems to have lost its values," Nitai observes.

The comedy-drama is set in a little cafe in a small town. The cafe isn't much, and doesn't have too many customers, but his owner (the wonderful Uri Avrahami) can't am, can't he? When his boss's loser buddy (Shraga Harpaz) comes back from the US, things start to go awry.

"I HAVE the feeling that our nation doesn't want to give up the idea that 'it's noble and honorable to die for your country,'" playwright Yigal Even-Or says passionately. "We've fallen in love with strength and like to sweep the price we pay for it under the rug."

"I wrote this play in 1985 when I served in the guard of honor that fired the volleys at military funerals, so the price has lived with me, and don't forget. I'm a graduate of



'Eastward' at the Simta Theater takes a long, hard look at mourning.

(Hani Mahabeh)

the Yom Kippur War."

His play is *Walk-Man*, which examines what Even-Or calls the death ethos. It's set in an army rehab unit, and tells the story of three IDF reserve soldiers after an ambush, one of whom is dead, the other is a paraplegic and the third has escaped, or so it seems, without a scratch.

Even-Or is an "establishment" playwright whose plays have been performed by the Children and Youth Theater and by the Cameri, where his notorious *Fleisher* (1994) caused a scandal all the

way to the Knesset.

Roy Rushkes is also an established playwright, but his passionate plays have never made it to the country's main stages although they've often been performed at the Acre Festival.

The surrealistic *Eastward* ("Mizraha"), is his seventh play for the Simta and looks at what he calls "irrelevant and unnecessary deaths," from a different perspective. It concerns the efforts of parents to come to grips with the death of their soldier son and is also very much about the ritual-

ized local conventions that surround loss and mourning.

The Postman Already Rang Twice by Adi Levitan and Nimrod Zilberman is about the Americanization of Israel and is directed by Itzik Seidoff. His first play by Yitzhak Bouton is called *Apple Pie* and deals with dark secrets that its protagonists thought had died with the end of World War II.

It's directed by Zeharia Tibi and stars Moscu Alkalai, Roni Mendelsohn and Margalit Stender, a perfect illustration of

what Nitai calls the combination of the experienced with the new that the festival is able to create.

Nitai retired last year, and Irit Frank, Simta's new general manager said she was happy to let him create while she took care of the nuts and bolts.

Innovations include the enlistment of students from the various theater design schools to get hands-on experience for credit. The annual budget there is some NIS 300,000. "which is why the plays have to be cheap to produce as well as good," says Nitai bluntly.

The kids the parents sent away

By MICHELLE BOORSTEIN

It was nasty, cold and muddy in England when Erika Estis arrived in December 1938, a 16-year-old refugee from Germany carrying only a small rucksack and the desperate hope that her parents would soon be free to join her.

But time passed, and her parents did not come to the unheated summer camp where she and other refugee children were staying. Others came, though, to browse for a child they might like to take home. "I remember parading around and wanting to be picked," Estis said.

"And then, one day, she was. I wound up with one family after another, none of whom were particularly thrilled to have me," she said. "It wasn't a good way for a girl to grow up."

Estis was one of an unusual group of child refugees known as "Kindertransporters." These were children, mostly Jewish, from Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Austria who were put alone on trains on the eve of the Holocaust and sent to Britain, which had agreed to take 1,000 children, but without their parents.

Their lives unfolded in a new documentary, *My Knees Were Jumping: Remembering the Kindertransporters*, and was the subject of a 1993 play, *Kindertransport*. Reams of memoirs have been written in the past decade, and another documentary is in the works.

Estis was shuffled from home to home during World War II, all the while receiving increasingly bleak letters from her parents and constantly checking lists of Holocaust survivors for their names. Eventually, she learned they had

been killed.

"I didn't care what happened after that," she said. "I didn't think I should have survived. I wasn't even pleased that I did."

AS the war neared, the number of young refugees swelled to 10,000. For most, the last memory they have of their parents is of them waving goodbye on the platform.

And that was that. Overwhelmed by the horror of the stories coming out of the Nazi death camps, many of the kindertransporters remained silent for years about their experience, feeling their memories of being orphaned in England and lingering fears of abandonment were literally not worth mentioning.

Friends and family knew only fragments of their past, only that a father had been "sent away" as a child and was still fragile, or that a mother was afraid of the security guard at the library because he wore a uniform.

Then Bertha Leverson, an English "kind," or child, decided in 1989 to have a reunion of the people she knew who had stayed in hostels and schools during the war. She expected 100 to 200 people. More than 1,200 showed up from around the world.

After that, the Kindertransport Association was founded in New York, national reunions were held and people began writing and talking about their experiences for the first time, relieved that there were so many others like them.

My Knees Were Jumping offers a new piece of the Holocaust mosaic, and it is both ugly and beautiful. After all, while the kindertransporters experienced the cruelty of their Nazi neighbors and then a painful separation from their parents, they also knew the pleasure of being res-

cued by strangers — in many cases, non-Jews.

Filmmaker Melissa Hacker opens all sorts of closed doors in her documentary. Taped at the first meeting of the KTA in upstate New York in 1990, the film shows the kaleidoscope of experiences the children had once they left home.

One woman says leaving Nazi Germany, where neighbors turned into enemies overnight, allowed her "to be a child again. I was surrounded by love and affection from total strangers." A man says that while he was kept fed, clothed and "reasonably warm" in England, he didn't have a single hug or kiss from age 8 to 16. "I felt I had lost my childhood," he said.

Other children were physically or sexually abused.

Regardless, many kindertransporters see their legacy as one of hope, not of despair.

"I speak to children's groups and I like to tell them we were rescued and that rescue is possible," said Estis, 76, who now lives in Hastings-on-the-Hudson, north of New York City. "If people get together, you can do some good in this world. There has to be a lesson in this."

That aside, it is often difficult to watch *My Knees Are Jumping*. It's hard to imagine someone putting a tag with an anonymous number around the neck of a 4-year-old, then placing the child on a train while his mother and father were kept behind a barbed wire.

One woman in the film tells of watching her father at the platform in Germany. As the train slowly pulled away, she saw him jump the gate, crying and yelling, "Don't take my baby! That is the last memory she has of her father."

The novelist Lore Segal was on a



Bread and jam for a 'kindertransport' refugee

kindertransport and is in the film with her mother, Franzl Groszmann. Groszmann's eyes widen as she tells of going to the Vienna train station around midnight, which is when most of the transports left.

"At the moment... I don't think I felt anything. I was alive, I walked. I did, but I don't think I felt," says Groszmann, now a 93-year-old New Yorker with a shock of bright white hair.

Not all kindertransporters were as fortunate as Segal, now 70, who was reunited with her mother. Most never again saw their parents.

Oddly, the kindertransport story begins with smiling, trusting children boarding trains they were told would take them on an exciting vacation. They would learn English and have an adventure, their parents told them, and then the family would be reunited.

"I would go, and my parents would follow," said Estis. "It was no big deal." (AP)

Talented native son stays close

By MICHAEL AJZENSTADT

When Israeli violinist Hagai Shaham was offered a teaching position in Bloomington, Indiana, one of the most regarded schools of music in the world, he refused. Not that there is anything wrong with Bloomington, mind you.

"It is a very prestigious place but it is far away and I preferred to teach here in Israel; it's how I can keep the violin-playing tradition going in Israel."

And so Shaham, 32, who makes his home in London, also holds a teaching position — teaching eight students — at the Rubin Music Academy in Jerusalem.

Add to that an active local concert schedule, and it becomes obvious that in spite of Shaham's residence in London and his rising international career, he tries to be here as much as he can.

He is very much aware of the fact that not many musicians do that these days. "Young talented musicians already tend to go abroad and study at only 15 so that they will be able to avoid the army. And those who do not go so young leave the minute they finish their military service."

"I can count on the fingers of one hand those musicians from my generation who still perform and work regularly in Israel. It's a pity, but I can only speak for myself. I do what I believe is right and everyone should make his own choice."

Shaham grew up in Kiryat Bialik and heard chamber music played at his home from a very early age.

"One of my first memories is that of a string quartet playing in the house. And so it was very natural for me to want to play the violin."

"When I was five I took two lessons with my father and we quarreled. So I stopped that, but when I was six I was already able to read music and began taking lessons in earnest. When I was 12 I was lucky to be accepted by Ilona Fehér."

Shaham is proud to have been one of Fehér's last students.

"It's important to continue the tradition of that school of violin playing. She herself studied with Jeno Hubay, whose works I'm now recording."

Shaham obviously enjoys playing the regular violin repertoire, but he is also searching regularly for unfamiliar works. Next week, for example, he will play Haydn's First Violin Concerto with the Israel Chamber Orchestra; later in the season he is to record a set of variations by Joachim with the Israel Camerata Jerusalem.

"I'm very much interested in forgotten violin repertoire and at times it takes a while to find it. These are by and large works from the beginning of the century that many might label salon music, but they are good works, very good ones."

He has recently recorded a concerto for two violins by Hummel because "it seems that disc labels

are searching for unfamiliar repertoire to record nowadays."

As for the Haydn concerto, "it's a very beautiful opus, quite Italian in style, written for strings and harpsichord with Italian rhythms and ornamentation passages in the Italian style. The adagio is quite sublime."

"I believe that among the so-called forgotten composers, Haydn is the greatest of them all and he is definitely underestimated."

Hagai Shaham's concert schedule for the season in Israel, after touring in France, Yugoslavia, Taiwan, South Africa and the Netherlands, includes performances from Beit Gabriel on the Kinneret to Side Boker.

He performs a chamber music program with Menahem Wiesenberg and Mira Zakai later this month; then he plays the two Brahms string sextets and a new sextet by Yehozkel Braun with some of his musical friends in January; then recitals with his longtime pianist colleague Arnon Erez and in April a series of concerts with the Israel Camerata.

But before all that, he plays Haydn's First Violin Concerto with the ICO at the Tel Aviv Museum next Sunday and Monday at 8:30 p.m.

In opera they die for love

CLASSIC DISCS

The average operatic story is one of unrequited love, or of a love that is cut off far too soon. Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, for example, is the bard's play that has the most operatic setting, because it is a typical operatic love story: boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy and girl reunite but alas, too late.

A new recording of Bellini's setting of the story about the star-crossed lovers from Verona, *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, brings forward the power of the tale and the music to new dimensions.

Under the evocative baton of Roberto Abbado the story comes to life in a most dramatic and poignant way. In contrast to the Gounod opera *Romeo et Juliette*, this time

the two lovers are portrayed by a soprano (Juliet) and a mezzo-soprano (Romeo). The rest of the very small cast features the respective fathers and Friar Lorenzo.

It is a very passionate story in which the combination of the soprano and mezzo voices in the tender and poetic duets is more than captivating.

Eva Mei is a passionate soprano whose voice is caressing, fresh and young, naive yet knowing, tender yet aching. Vessellina Kasarova is a more dramatic Romeo, yet also young, eager and passionate. And the combination of the two is romantic, dramatic and sensual.

The three male counterparts add their power to the drama but they are only secondary to the two lovers, whose young love cannot be denied simply because of their two feuding families (Bellini: *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, RCA 0-9026 68899 2).

The Little Mermaid legend is more than similar to that of Romeo and Juliet, yet here we talk about lovers who come not from opposing worlds, but totally different ones.

The Disney film by that name opted for the happy-end version of the myth, but the Andersen story opts for the tragic conclusion, in which the prince dies in the arms of the mermaid who takes him with her into the depths of the ocean.

Dvorak's beguiling *Rusalka* is one of the most touching operas in the repertoire. And the new recording under Sir Charles Mackerras, a specialist in Slavic music in general and Czech music in particular, reveals all the poetic beauty of the score.

Rusalka is an opera taking place in nature: it is a story about nature, about woods, lakes, the moon and so-called human love which is totally shattered because of human lack of belief.

Renee Fleming is the touching nymph of the title, who projects all the pangs of love in a most touching way. Ben Heppner is her arrogant prince who finds out all too late that sometimes not all that glitters is gold and that true love does not need words to come through.

The final duet, which ends in his death and her total despair, becomes the most touching moment in this recording, the first time in which the two really express their sincere love one to the other (Dvorak: *Rusalka*, Decca 460 568-2).

ALTHOUGH the ice princess Turandot does marry the mysterious prince who solved her three riddles in Puccini's *Turandot*, the center of this opera is also one of unrequited love.

It is the story of the slave Liu who secretly loves the prince Calaf, knowing that he would

never be able to love her back, and who stabs herself happily to protect the man she loves.

The new recording of *Turandot*, which was made by Zubin Mehta in the Forbidden City of Beijing, features the tender and poetic soprano Barbara Fritoli as Liu, whose two arias are, in this recording, the most touching, sincere and poetic moments of the opera.

Her prince, the crystal-clear tenor of Sergei Larin, sings the ever-popular "Nessun dorma" with panache, and the princess of the title, Giovanna Casolla, seems to lack the humanity of Fritoli in her final duet with Calaf.

Mehta is exemplary in this most passionate opera: he gives it a much more tender reading this time around than in his previous recording of it (Puccini: *Turandot* at the Forbidden City of Beijing, RCA 74321 60617 2).

NEWS

of the muse

Sacred music in Nazareth

The Musica Sacra liturgical music festival in Nazareth returns January 1 and 2 to the city's churches. Organized by the Kibbutz Chamber Orchestra, this edition of the festival comprises eight concerts featuring local and visiting ensembles and choirs in a program of more (the Mozart requiem) and less (Gregorian and Russian liturgical selections) familiar works. Michael Ajzenstadt

Conservatory concerts added

Subscribers snapped up the two chamber-music concert series at the Israel Music Conservatory in Tel Aviv even before they began. To satisfy public demand the conservatory has added three extra concerts, starting December 27, tickets for which are available individually or as a mini-subscription. Michael Ajzenstadt

Frank Peleg remembered

Frank Peleg was one of the most important Israeli pianists and harpsichordists of all times. To commemorate the 30th anniversary of his death, the Voice of Music radio station is presenting a week of Peleg recordings (December 19-26) featuring one to two hours of daily recordings by Peleg ranging in style from Handel, Haydn and Bach to Stravinsky and contemporary Israeli music, as well as some of Peleg's own annotated radio music programs. Michael Ajzenstadt

Reuben Rose poetry competition winners

A Californian and three Israelis were the top prize winners in the annual Reuben Rose Poetry Competition organized by Voices: the Israel English Poetry Association. First-time competitor Sheila Goldberg Johnson of California won the \$300 first prize for "Dear Aunt." Amiel Schotz of Beersheba won the second prize, with Dvora Kreder-Geller of Tivon and Jezreel Valley resident Lila Julius winning third and fourth prizes respectively. All three of the Israelis won an honorable mention last year. The judge this year, the ninth, was Bar-Ilan University professor Richard Sherwin, who said "I wish I could have given more prizes and more honorable mentions, the standard was so high." The competition is a memorial to Rose, who was the founder of Voices, and who died in 1989. The awards ceremony was at the ZOA House in Tel Aviv last Thursday. Helen Kaye

Local poet writes first novel

Poet and publicist Ilan Schoenfeld's first novel, *Shedletse* is due to hit the bookstores in early January. Borrowing from the rich lore of the mystical Jewish world, and set in our own time, the book is a series of stories about strange creatures told by Yossele Green, half Jew, half frog. Schoenfeld says that he wrote half modern, half hasidic Hebrew which "seemed to fit what I was writing about." This *Shedletse* (a Hebrew wordplay on "little devil" and "pranksters"), isn't real either, but a mythical place composed of longings and memories about a real city in Poland long gone. Helen Kaye

Music on a Winter's Night at the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem

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Saturday Night, December 19th



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Admission: NIS 40. Discount for Museum members, Olden, Students, Soldiers, Seniors and Visiting card holders: NIS 25. Entrance includes wine and cheese.

Under the auspices of The Cultural Department, City of Jerusalem. Concert proceeds benefit the Jerusalem Post Funds.

The Museum opens at 20:00. Concert begins at 20:30.

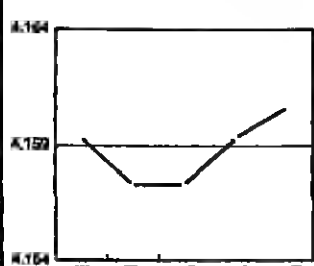
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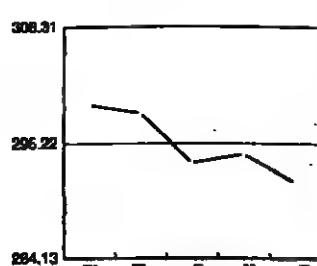
BUSINESS

in brief

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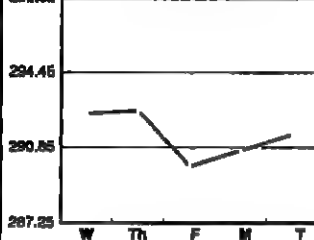


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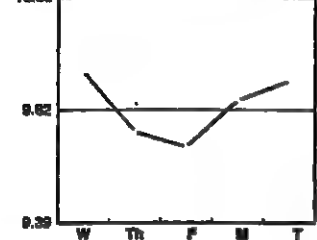
GOLD

\$ per ounce

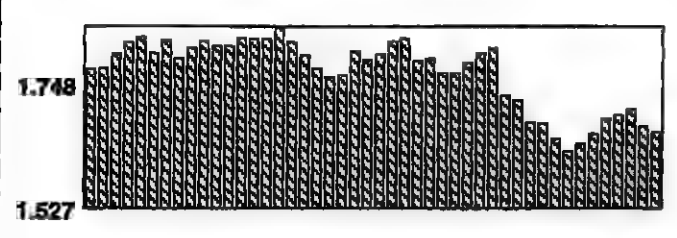


OIL

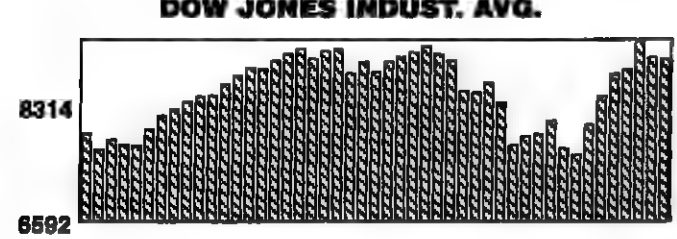
\$ per barrel of Brent crude



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Givot Olam delays rights issue by a week

Givot Olam Oil Exploration Limited Partnership yesterday announced the postponement of its planned rights issue after the Securities Authority said the company's recent discovery of oil must be published in the prospectus.

The company, which hopes to raise NIS 16.8 million by floating a rights issue on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange, made headlines last week after it began retesting a 15-meter section of an old well, and hit a small quantity of oil at a site near Rosh Ha'ayin.

The company says the discovery strongly suggests that the company's proposed new drilling site, Megeed-3, could bear up to one billion barrels of oil.

The Securities Authority asked for a postponement because the new information that came to light about the Megeed-2 well was not published in the company's prospectus. The authority said it wished to give the public time to digest the news. The new offering is to be held on December 23.

Nicky Blackburn

Solel Boneh wins contracts for NIS 200m.

Solel Boneh Building & Infrastructure, the country's largest construction company, yesterday announced that it had won contracts for over NIS 200 million. The projects include the establishment of surgical unit in Nahariya Government Hospital for NIS 100m, the building of a train station at the Tel Aviv University at an investment of more than NIS 30m, the building of a new neighborhood in Gedera for NIS 27.5m, and the construction of two new buildings in Beersheba for NIS 20m.

Dan Gerstenfeld

Exports to Asia plunge 24.6% in 11 months

Exports to Asia fell 24.6 percent to \$2.924 billion during the first 11 months of the year, compared to the equivalent period in 1997, the Central Bureau of Statistics said this week. The largest falls in sales were to Singapore (-37.8%), Hong Kong (-35.5%), Korea (-34.3%) and Japan (-26.9%).

David Zev Harris

ECI wins \$8m. Russia contract

ECI Telecom has signed a contract worth \$8 million to supply its SDH network solutions to Central Telegraph, Russia, the company said this week.

Under the three-year contract Israel's leading digital telecommunications and data transmission manufacturer will supply Central Telegraph with multiplexers and network management equipment.

The Russian company plans to use the equipment to build a new regional SDH network that will connect half a million subscriber lines in the Moscow region.

First orders have already been received within this contract and shipments began in the fourth quarter of 1998.

The companies both expressed interest in increasing their activities in future.

Nicky Blackburn

UK unveils new pension scheme

LONDON (Reuters) - The British government yesterday announced sweeping changes to the country's pension system which will replace the existing state earnings-related pension scheme (SERPS) with new "stakeholder" pensions.

It also said that private companies providing the new pensions from 2001 would have their fees limited to between 0.5 and 1.0 percent, compared to the current industry average of 1.5 percent.

The government said it would tomorrow publish a separate consultation document on plans for regulating the pension firms, which will offer the new second tier pensions.

Unveiling the plans to parliament, Social Security Secretary

Alistair Darling said the basic state pension would stay as a universal scheme, uprated each year with inflation.

A system of national insurance rebates would encourage low and middle income earners to contribute to the new second state scheme, and the government would reward the work of the 2.5 million Britons who care for children or sick relatives.

"Everyone who can should have a funded second pension where they can make additional contributions towards their retirement. We'll help them to do that," Darling told parliament. "In turn, the government has a responsibility to provide security for those who cannot save enough."

Teva's Hurvitz convicted of tax fraud

By DAN GERSTENFELD

Teva president and CEO Eli Hurvitz and two senior managers of pharmaceutical importer Promedico were convicted of tax fraud by Jerusalem District Court yesterday.

Hurvitz, with Benjamin Jesselson and Alexander Eisenberg (who ran Promedico until 1993), were accused of evading some \$18 million in taxes since 1982, including \$3 million during the years when Promedico was a Teva subsidiary. Teva sold the company in 1987.

According to the indictment, the company set up a straw company overseas to conceal income, and kept fraudulent books.

Hurvitz was convicted of fraud, while Jesselson and Eisenberg were convicted of tax evasion. The three were acquitted, however, of mismanagement with intent to deceive.

In her verdict, Judge Ayala Procaccia wrote that the three conducted the crime systematically, while concealing the source of income from tax authorities for several years, thus evading millions of dollars.

Hurvitz, a former chairman of the Manufacturers Association, one of the country's most prominent business leaders, said he was surprised by the verdict and intends to fight it. "The sentence is wrong," he told reporters outside the courthouse.

Jesselson and Eisenberg refused to comment.

Following the decision, trading in Teva shares, both on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange and in New York's Nasdaq market was halted,



Teva CEO Eli Hurvitz leaves Jerusalem District Court, after he was convicted of tax fraud, along with Benjamin Jesselson and Alexander Eisenberg, who ran drug importer-exporter Promedico, a former Teva subsidiary. (Ariel Jerolimski)

but analysts said the verdict is not likely to impact negatively on Teva.

Hurvitz's merger-and-acquisitions strategies have turned Teva into the country's largest drug company. The company is the

most heavily traded Israeli share on Wall Street.

Jesselson is involved in several local companies, including Elite Food Industries and Promedico, the drug importer representing multi-national pharmaceutical

giant, Pfizer. Recently it was reported that he had sold his holding in Mirabilis for \$16m, when it was purchased by America Online.

The Securities Authority is currently conducting an investigation

into the activities of Jesselson and businessman Shlomo Eisenberg, who jointly control investment holding company Arad, on suspicion of deceiving shareholders and conspiring to manipulate the results of a company vote.

US inflation headed toward 12-year low

WASHINGTON (Bloomberg) - The US consumer price index - the broadest gauge of costs for goods and services - posted a tame increase in November and inflation was on course for its lowest annual reading in 12 years.

The CPI rose 0.2 percent and the core rate, which excludes food and energy costs, rose 0.2%, the Labor Department said. Both measures matched October's increases.

With world commodity prices falling, inflation is "the tamest it's been since the 1930s," said Russ Sheldon, chief economist at MCM MoneyWatch in New York, before the report.

What's more, production costs have moderated. That's welcome news for consumers, and should help offset any increase in service costs, Sheldon said.

Through November, the CPI increased at a 1.6% annual rate, down from a 1.8% pace during the first 11 months of last year - and a

1.7% rate for all of 1997. The last time inflation was this low was 1986, when it fell to 1.1%.

At the same time, the core rate of the CPI has risen at a 2.4% annual rate, up from a 2.0% pace during the first 11 months of last year. Analysts expected a 0.1% increase in November's CPI and a 0.2% increase in the core rate.

Energy prices, which account for about a 10th of the index, were unchanged during November as a drop in gasoline and fuel oil costs offset increases in natural gas and electricity.

Food prices, which account for about a fifth of the index, increased 0.1% last month as an increase in fruit and beef prices was mostly offset by drops in the cost of pork, poultry and fresh vegetables.

About 55% of the CPI covers prices consumers pay for services, ranging from doctor visits to airline tickets. Goods, ranging from food to autos, account for the rest.

November CPI rises 1.3%

By DAVID ZEV HARRIS

November's consumer price index (CPI) increased by a lower-than-expected 1.3 percent to 166.2 points, compared to 164.1 in October, the Central Bureau of Statistics announced yesterday.

On the basis of the inflationary pattern of the first 11 months of the year, the bureau calculated inflation will end the year at some 9.5%. Between January and the end of November the cost of living increased 8.6%, with inflation climbing 8.2% over the last 12 months.

The November increase was relatively moderate, compared to the 3% jump registered in October - principally the result of the shekel's sharp depreciation against the dollar and the Bank of Israel's basket of five major currencies.

The largest increase in the CPI last month was in the price of foods other than fruit and vegetables (+3%). Flour and bread products contributed much of the increase, after the government agreed to increase the cost of flour,

given the dollar's appreciation. Unlike the October CPI, the November housing index rose a relatively insignificant 0.2%, with rental prices even falling 0.2%.

These and the other increases in the prices of goods for household upkeep (+2.3%), furniture (+4.1%), clothing and footwear (+4.7%) and health (1.4%) were offset in part by a 7.4% decrease in fruit and vegetable costs.

Bureau officials yesterday rejected calls for the reform of the housing index to be put on hold, saying the decision was taken in March and will be implemented on time in January. Since the last CPI, both the Treasury and Housing Ministry have urged the bureau to delay the change.

The index is presently calculated based mainly on the purchase price of housing. The new system will show an 80% weighting in favor of rented accommodation. The ministries say they are concerned this will lead to extra volatility in months where there are sharp fluctuations in the value

of the shekel against the dollar. The bureau, however, believes that in the longer term the new index will more accurately reflect actual changes in the cost of housing.

Meanwhile, the Purchasing Managers' Index for November fell back to its April level of 45.3%, its lowest ever level, said Dan and Bradstreet and the Association of Purchasing Managers. The index reflects industrial performance during the most recent four months.

Industrial activity by November had slowed to its pace during the first half of the year. The 50% mark is the difference between growth and slowdown. In October the index rose to 53.2%.

All the individual categories showed a downturn in activity: domestic demand for industrial products (42.5%), exports (44.2%), industrial production (46.6%), raw material stocks (43.5%), purchases of raw materials for manufacturing purposes (36.5%) and employment in industry (39.3%), while raw material pricing increased 72%.

London's lord mayor:

City 'finally' recognizes Israel business potential

By NICKY BLACKBURN

After years of neglect London's financial community has finally recognized Israel's business potential, said Lord Peter Levene, the lord mayor of the City of London, yesterday.

Levene, who is in Israel for a seminar on the City of London's financial services, said that for years British operators had not made an effort to entice Israeli companies to the London Stock Exchange.

As a result, today there are some 70 Israeli companies quoted on NASDAQ and the New York Stock Exchange, while only one is quoted on the London Stock Exchange and six on London's Alternative Investment Market (AIM).

"It doesn't make sense because London is the main international financial center in the world, while New York caters mostly for domestic companies rather than foreign ones," he said.

"We have to get our act together. We haven't tried hard enough. If we had tried harder we would have had more success than we have had up to now. I've been selling things to people for years and I know that if you don't try to sell, you're not going to succeed."

Levene, who is also chairman of Europe operations for Bankers Trust, one of America's biggest banks, and previously worked as a senior adviser at Morgan Stanley, said a great deal of the problem is that up to now Israel has been defined as an emerging market. "Israel tends to get lumped together with other emerging markets, such as those in Eastern Europe which were a sorry story for investors. It's become tarred by the same brush and investors shy away," he said.

"I don't regard Israel as being an emerging market. It has fully emerged. It's not appropriate to lump Israel with Bulgaria or Thailand, it's a developed country and can be regarded as a European country. No-one would call Austria or Ireland emerging markets."

Levene said that recently London has begun to recognize the changes that have taken place in Israel and is now taking a more aggressive stance towards seeking out Israeli business. "We absolutely must recognize the reality of what's going on here. This is a sophisticated country," he said.

With this in mind he has been in talks with large Israeli holding companies such as Koor and Clal with the aim of persuading them to join the London Stock Exchange.

"They are quoted on New York, why shouldn't they be quoted in London as well," he said. "Clearly we'll have to target these customers more directly." Levene, who describes himself as the "leader of the charge" said he hoped that the financial services seminar would boost links between the two countries. Already one agreement has been reached between a British financial services company and an Israeli company.

Levene also wished to dispel any rumors that London's markets are not open to Israelis. "We have heard murmurings that some Israeli companies don't bother going to London because they feel they won't get a fair hearing or any interest there. I don't know where that message comes from and I want to dispel it. Why would we come here if we are not interested in Israel?"

Levene has been involved in Israeli affairs for decades and is clearly an admirer, pointing out on a

number of occasions all that the country has achieved in the last 50 years.

"Everyone is looking for the new Holy Grail, the second Microsoft and you're much more likely to find it here than anywhere else in the world," he said. "You wouldn't find it in Austria or Portugal but there are several potential examples here. This is a pretty unusual place."

If the peace process gets back on track, Levene is optimistic about Israel's future potential as a financial center for the Middle East.

"At the moment finance comes here, hits a brick wall and then bounces back to the US or Europe. In the future, Israel could become the financial center for the whole region. People feel comfy here. It's a Western country with Western values, a highly educated workforce, and people speak English."

Later today Levene and his delegation will go to the Palestinian Authority for two days to meet industry and banking officials as well as Chairman Yasser Arafat.

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سكزا من الامم

Penetrating enemy lines

With its recent purchase of a 9% stake in rival ICL, Canada's PCS has proved itself a force to reckon with in the local chemical sector

By NEIL COHEN

Barely a week goes by without some real action. And by this I don't mean signs of oil. (It would be great, but don't get your hopes up.)

What I am talking about is the snatching up by Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan (PCS) of a 9 percent stake in rival Israel Chemicals (ICL).

The move is reminiscent of the Kuwait Investment Office's brilliant maneuver in 1987, when it took advantage of crashing markets and the desperately troubled privatization offering to acquire a sizeable stake in British Petroleum (BP). The fact that the representative of a foreign government, itself one of the world's leading oil producers, had bought a significant stake in what could be regarded as a strategic national commercial asset, caused an uproar in Britain at the time.

I do not know how strong an argument can be made for the strategic importance of ICL. One of the occupational hazards of a public listing is the ability of temporarily unseen and potentially hostile entities to acquire a stake in your business.

Given the Israel Corporation's majority share in ICL, there is hardly little immediate threat. The most intriguing issue in the short term is the current right of PCS to appoint a member to ICL's board, though ICL may seek to change its articles of association to eliminate this possibility. In any event, such a director would have an obliga-

tion to keep confidential any information given to him by ICL. He would also be required to act in ICL's best interests.

More than the short-term tactical issues, the PCS move has greater long term meaning for ICL's public shareholders. PCS did not buy 9% to stay at 9% forever. Nine percent is a look-see move, to get to know ICL a little better, from a little closer up. Sooner or later they will probably increase the stake to somewhere between 15% and 20%, if they haven't started to do so already.

That will send a message to other competitors that PCS means business. If anyone else is interested in gaining control of ICL, they will face a formidable competitor who already owns a meaningful stake and will make life difficult for them. It sends a breath of cold air down the necks of the ICL board and management that a potentially hostile competitor is waiting and watching. And last, but not least, the PCS move indicates that from a strategic, industry standpoint, ICL is cheap.

LIKE many industries right now, the chemical business is going through some pretty major consolidation. Big players are swallowing up small- and medium-sized competitors, and medium-sized players and even giants are merging with one another to achieve critical mass and economies of scale in order to compensate for falling prices and pressured margins. I do not know the right time to buy ICL, but PCS thinks the shares are cheap. The

PERSONAL FINANCE



seems to be a fair likelihood that it, or some other industry player, will try to buy control of ICL at some future point. If that happens, the price will likely be higher than it is today.

ICL is not really an example of this phenomenon, but more and more players are looking at the balance sheets and cash-generation capabilities of companies on the FTSE. Many of the leveraged takeovers (Dilek, Granit Heacamel, MZPK to name a few) that have taken place in the past few months have been driven by underutilized assets on the balance sheet and by strong cashflow, which supports the debt taken on to buy the target company and ultimately run it down.

At Delek, the company's holding in Supersol was spun out as a stock dividend to shareholders. Then Delek Motors, a terrific cash generator, paid a large cash divi-

dend, enabling Delek's new controlling shareholder to significantly reduce the debt burden taken on to buy the company.

The same now seems to be happening at Granit Hacarmel, which owns Sonol, Supergas and big chunks of real estate. The company said last week that it would pay a dividend of NIS 500 million, nearly half its market capitalization. Like Delek, control of Granit recently changed hands. The new owners are no doubt keen on returning some of their investment.

There were rumors too that Yang, part of the IDB group, would soon announce a substantial dividend. The company has a very strong balance sheet and plenty of cash. I am a little more skeptical, since the big conglomerates have tended not to use their subsidiaries' cash reserves to pay out dividends to public shareholders. There has been little pressure on them to do so, and insufficient focus on shareholder return has allowed them to sit on the cash or reinvest it in other businesses.

I think Ytong is still cheap, and our holding has performed reasonably well. But I find it hard to get

excited about the company unless more aggressive moves are taken to realize shareholder value.

I think there is a lot of market risk right now, and would not be committing new money to the market until things are a good deal clearer or prices a good deal lower. With Wall Street having regained most of the ground it lost in the summer, stocks are far from cheap. Wall Street's strength has supported other markets, which might otherwise have come under considerable pressure.

Given the uncertainty in the US over Clinton's potential impeachment, and here over a shaky government, violence in the West Bank, and problems in the peace process and the general economy, 12% risk-free in the bank (even a shade more in government paper) sounds pretty good.

The writer works in the investment industry and may hold positions in securities mentioned in the column. This column should not be taken as advice to buy, sell or continue to hold any securities and anyone acting on the advice of this column does so at his or her own risk.

NEIL'S PORTFOLIO

	No. of shares	Cost/bshare	Total cost	Current price	Current value
Citrus Properties convertible	10,416.60	0.96	10,025	1.24	12,906.77
Tevco	8.51	1,035.60	8,810	1,856.00	15,788.99
Bank Tefahot	4.97	1,303.34	6,481	1,860.00	9,248.48
Caf Israel	143.68	69.60	10,025	94.30	13,548.93
Dun Hotels	425.65	8.81	3,769	0.25	3,973.24
Jafron Tabori	596.80	8.98	5,025	7.25	4,036.80
Yongco	640.00	7.79	5,010	9.88	6,195.20
IDB	1,432.66	3.49	5,025	3.60	5,157.58
Koor	28.00	357.05	10,017	378.00	10,584.00
Begco	625.00	12.00	7,520	12.53	7,843.75
Elbit Imaging	125.31	39.90	5,020	44.20	5,538.70
1 month cash deposit @ 12%					64,125.59
Total portfolio value			100,000		158,911.40
Luzak Commercial ordinary	4,314.51	1.34	5,775	1.35	5,824.59
Caf Electronics	16.31	283.28	4,641	600.00	9,787.80
Tower Semiconductor	146.00	\$3.75	3,392	\$9.56	5,806.48
Israel Chemicals	3,468.37	2.58	9,023	3.80	13,253.81
Dalek Alonim	1,219.88	3.32	4,075	6.04	7,368.08
Biotech General	224.00	\$11.00	8,482	\$5.91	5,505.85
Discom Investments	130.00	81.62	9,819	105.00	12,730.00
Israel Corporation	47.33	211.30	10,025	314.00	14,660.36
Ayalon Insurance	729.93	6.85	5,100	6.17	4,503.87
A. Levy vitamins	4,854.37	1.03	5,100	0.35	1,674.76
MZPR	1,002.00	7.87	7,505	7.09	7,304.18
ESC Medical	120.00	\$21.44	9,950	\$11.06	5,519.82
1 month cash deposit @ 12%					63,290.43
Total portfolio value			100,000		157,221.80
AlKorad convertible	5,847.95	.86	5,020	.85	4,941.52
Zarshanir's convertible	5,206.33	.96	5,020	1.02	5,312.50
Gamat convertible	3,501.40	1.43	5,020	1.58	5,532.21
1 Month deposit					99,418.12
Total portfolio value			100,000		115,204.30

MUTUAL FUNDS

[illegible]

Banks' downgrading weakens TASE

Tel Aviv

Israeli stocks dropped yesterday for the third time in four days, led by the country's two largest banks, Bank Hapoalim and Bank Leumi, after they were downgraded at Warburg Dillon Read.

The Maof Index of the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange's 25 largest companies fell 1.46 percent to 296.22. Bank Hapoalim lost 2.8 percent to 7.38 and Bank Leumi dropped 2.5 percent to 5.78. Israel's two largest banks were lowered to "hold" at Warburg Dillon Read.

Teva Pharmaceutical Industries lost 1.8 percent to 171.2. The shares dropped ahead of a Jerusalem District Court decision yesterday in a two-year tax fraud case against Teva Pharmaceutical Industries. The American depositary receipts of Israel's largest drugmaker dropped 4 percent Monday.

Koor Industries dropped 2.5 percent to NIS 353. Investigators at the Antitrust Authority have recommended indicting executives at Israel's largest manufacturer and its Telrad and Tadiran Telecommunications subsidiaries on accusations the companies coordinated prices in sales to state-run telephone company Bezeq. Koor's ADRs plunged 6 percent Monday.

Clal Israel lost 1.1 percent to 90.3. Clal Israel CEO Isaac Kaul, who previously served as Bezeq CEO, may also be indicted in the price-fixing case, the daily *Globe* newspaper reported.

Europe

European stocks were mixed as Pearson Plc and other media companies gained after the publisher of the *Financial Times* said second-half profit growth is on target.

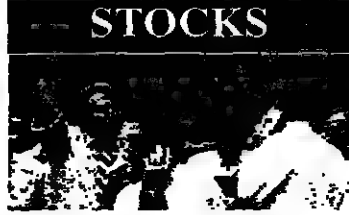
Diageo Plc and other beverage companies fell amid concern sales may shrink as world economic growth slows next year.

The Bloomberg Europe 500 index rose 0.45 points, or 0.2 percent, to 186.39, with gainers and decliners evenly matched.

Four of the benchmark indexes in Europe's eight biggest stock markets rose and four fell. "As we go into the first quarter of next year, positive news will become rare," said Dino Fuschillo, the head of European equities at Societe Generale Asset Management, which oversees about 500 million pounds (\$843 million). He favors drug and telecommunications stocks.

Pearson, the UK's third-largest media company, rose 47p, or 4.5 percent, to 1,109 after it said sales and profits for the second half of the year are matching expectations. The company had dropped 3 percent yesterday on concern that it would announce profit was slowing in a statement published before trading yesterday.

"I'm not surprised Pearson's up because of that good news," said Michael Krinner, a fund manager at Bank fuer Handel und Effekten in Zurich. "People are worried about profit warnings. We're seeing a really big number



Maof 296.22 ▼ 1.46%
Dow Jones 8797 ▲ 1.47%
FTSE 5557.1 ▲ 0.41%
Nikkei 14011.19 ▼ 0.71%

of profit warnings and that really scares me." Pearson's announcement fed gains in other European media companies. Reed International Plc, the world's largest publisher by market capitalization, rose 15.5 guilders to 445.25. Reuters Group Plc, the world's largest financial information provider, rose 9.5p to 533. Diageo Plc led the Bloomberg beverage index 2.1 percent lower, the biggest decline by an industry group in terms of index points. The index has dropped 5.7 percent since Friday, when Coca-Cola Co., the world's largest soft-drink maker, said fourth-quarter earnings would be as much as 20 percent below expectations.

Diageo, the world's biggest liquor maker, fell 30p to 617, taking its three-day decline to 9 percent amid concern that it too will be hurt by shrinking sales as world economic growth slows.

Asia

Japan's key stock index fell to a six-week low, led by banks, on concern the nationalization of Nippon Credit Bank Ltd. will be followed by more failures.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index fell 100.43, or 0.7 percent, to 14,011.19, its lowest since Nov. 2. Yasuda Trust & Banking Co., Industrial Bank of Japan Ltd. and Sakura Bank Ltd., the three most active stocks by volume, paced declines after the government said on Sunday it will take over NCB.

"With all the media speculation about who's going to be the next NCB, the weaker banks have become very obvious targets," said Tsuguya Onozuka, a supervisor at Yamatae Securities Co.

Elsewhere, Korea's Kospi index rose 3.7 percent, to its highest level this year, led by brokers, as investors bet their earnings will be boosted by record trading volumes. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index rose 1.3 percent amid reports of cost cutting by two developers. Singapore's Straits Times Index fell 0.8 percent as Cerebos Pacific Ltd. and Fraser & Neave Ltd., two food and beverage companies, reported disappointing profits.

Yasuda Trust & Banking, the fifth largest of Japan's seven trust banks, was the biggest decliner, tumbling 17 percent to 89 yen. Earlier, its shares plunged as much as 44 percent, prompting bank officials to issue a statement saying there was "no cause for concern" about its business. (Bloomberg)

Wall Street

NEW YORK (Reuters) - The Dow Jones industrial average gained more than 100 points in late afternoon trading yesterday, rebounding following four straight sessions of losses.

The Dow was up 101.95 points at 8,797.55.

The dollar rebounded against most major currencies in light trading yesterday as US stocks ended a five-session downturn.

The US currency rose against the Japanese yen and German mark as the Dow Jones industrial average climbed 127.70 to close Tuesday at 8,823.30.

"The rebound in the stock market and some bargain hunting was probably behind the dollar's rise," said Kevin Logan, senior market economist for Dresdner Bank.

"There weren't really any news items or events to motivate trading today," he said.

The dollar bought 116.35 yen in late New York trading, up from 115.49 yen late Monday. The dollar rose to 1.6575 German marks, from 1.6489 marks.

Other late dollar rates in New York, compared with late rates Monday: 1.3412 Swiss francs, up from 1.3273; 5.5380 French francs, up from 5.5298; 1.641.50 Italian lire, up from 1.632.85; and 1.5410 Canadian dollars, down from 1.5419.

The British pound was quoted at \$1.6852, down from \$1.6929.

Dollar up after Japan says strong yen hurts recovery

The dollar rose against the yen for the first time in six days after Taiichi Sakai, chief of Japan's Economic Planning Agency, warned that an "unexpectedly strong" yen will hurt Japan's recovery.

The yen's 12 percent gain against the dollar this year is an obstacle to recovery because it hurts exports, one of the strongest parts of the economy.

"The last thing Japan wants is a yen that's too strong," said Rob Deluca, chief trader at Den Danske Bank. "They don't want it under 110 yen. They'd be much more pleased at 120 yen."

The dollar rose as high as 117.60 yen from 115.49 late Monday in New York, and was recently at 116.32 yen. It rose to 1.6575 marks from 1.6486 on expectations a report today will show German

business confidence is waning, boosting talk of a cut in European interest rates early next year.

The dollar also rose against the European currency unit, pushing the Euro's value down to \$1.1857 from \$1.1917. Euro will be traded one-for-one with euros, the new single currency, from January.

In New York trading, the dollar extended gains amid a report showing US consumer prices rose more than expected. That downplayed speculation the Federal Reserve may cut interest rates again soon.

Highlighting Japan's bleak outlook, Tokyo's benchmark Nikkei 225 stock index slipped 100.43 points to 14,011.19, extending a two-day decline to 2.74%. Also, Japanese department store sales fell for the 19th time in 20 months and steel production dropped for a 12th straight month.



Dollar 4.164 ▲ 0.05%
Basket 4.5764 ▼ 0.01%
Mark 2.5131 ▼ 0.19%
Sterling 7.028 ▲ 0.34%

In Germany, the closely watched Ifo research institute's index of Western German business confidence probably fell to 92.0 in November, according to a Bloomberg News poll. It slid to

near a two-year low of 92.4 in October. The report is scheduled for release today.

Sputtering growth in Europe's largest economy could prompt the European Central Bank to lower interest rates next year after the introduction of the euro. ECB President Wim Duisenberg said he's not ruling out more rate cuts, though further easing would have a "limited impact."

"When we have reached price stability, we must attempt to get rates as low as possible," Duisenberg said in an interview to appear in the German weekly *Die Zeit*.

He repeated that keeping interest rates low is the "maximum contribution" monetary policy can make. "It's up to others to improve the conditions for growth and employment," he said, a signal to national

governments to cut budget deficits.

On December 3, Europe central banks at the 11 nations adopting the euro cut their benchmark interest rates, 10 of them to 3%. Italy reduced its main rate to 3.5% and is expected to lower it again soon to 3%.

The US Commerce Department yesterday reported consumer prices rose 0.2% last month, just above the 0.1% expected by economists in a Bloomberg News poll. Core CPI, which subtracts food and energy prices, rose 0.2% as expected.

"A stronger figure means the Fed will wait to cut rates," said Karl Haldrup, chief currency trader at CIBC Bank. "The dollar should go higher on the back" of the report.

Lower rates hurt the dollar by reducing the return on deposits and bonds denominated in it. (Bloomberg)

Oil prices down 38% from last year

Oil

Crude oil for January delivery was little changed at \$11.27 a barrel, down 2 cents, on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

Traders are awaiting a meeting tomorrow of officials from three key oil-producing countries, looking for signs of whether more cuts in output are likely.

The three countries, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and Mexico, earlier this year orchestrated output cuts that eventually involved 14 other producers. Still, that effort failed to boost oil prices, which now are 38 percent lower than a year ago.

Traders were also awaiting a weekly inventory report from the American Petroleum Institute, which was issued after trading ended.

Precious Metals

Platinum for January delivery rose as much as \$5.70, or 1.6 percent, to \$354.50 an ounce on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

South Africa's Lonrho Platinum, the world's third-largest miner of platinum ore, said a shaft at its Eastern Platinum mine will be closed through January 10, because a shift of surrounding earth made mine work dangerous.

The closing will cost the company 60,000 metric tons of ore production out of annual production of about 9 million tons.

The disruption to mine output comes at a time when traders are waiting for Russia, the world's second largest platinum producer after South Africa, to confirm its 1999 export quotas for platinum and palladium. During the first half of

COMMODITIES

Gold \$292.05 ▲ 1.6%
Crude Oil \$102.3 ▲ 0.07%
CRB 192.18 ▲ 1.51%

1998, Russian shipments of precious metals were held up by government delays in setting quotas and issuing export licenses. Gold for February delivery rose as much as \$1.70, or 0.6 percent, to \$294.50 an ounce on the Comex division of the New York Mercantile Exchange. Traders are watching to see if

investors will turn to precious metals if US financial markets are disrupted by the impeachment proceedings against President Bill Clinton. On Monday, Clinton lost ground in his efforts to avoid impeachment in the House and trial in the Senate, as several moderate Republicans in the House said they would vote for impeachment or were leaning in that direction.

Others

Coffee for March delivery rose as much as 3.15 cents, or 2.7 percent, from \$1.21 a pound on the Coffee, Sugar & Cocoa Exchange in New York.

Colder weather forecast for northern growing regions of Mexico, the biggest coffee exporter to the US, raised concern that the country's next crop could suffer frost damage. (Bloomberg)

US bonds decline as investors balk at low yields

US bonds fell for the second time in three days, as long-term yields near two-month lows and signs of stability in the stock market provided investors with little incentive to buy Treasuries.

"Yields aren't too attractive right now," said Charles Ullrich, who oversees \$2 billion of bonds at Phoenix, Arizona, Ullrich said he sees the 30-year bond yield climbing to 5.25 percent in six months. The 30-year Treasury bond fell

6/32, or \$1.88 per \$1,000 security, to 103 7/8. Its yield rose 1 basis point to 5.00 percent. Yields on two-year notes, the most actively traded Treasury securities, rose 3 basis points to 4.42 percent.

US stocks, which tumbled Monday amid profit warnings by Intel Inc., the world's biggest technology maker, and other companies, were little changed in early trading, diminishing the appeal of fixed-income securities as a haven. Bonds rallied recently, pushing



US 30-year T-bill yield 5.40.01
30-year yields down 30 basis

points in the past four weeks, amid expectations the world's largest economy will slow while inflation, which erodes the value of bonds, remains tame in the coming months.

The government reported yesterday that consumer prices rose 0.2 percent in November, more than the 0.1 percent forecast by analysts in a Bloomberg News survey. Prices, excluding food and energy costs, rose 0.2 percent, as expected. The report shows what everyone

already knows, that inflation is well in check, said Charles Reinhard, a market strategist at ABN Amro Inc. (Bloomberg)

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ISRAEL MONEY MARKETS

Patah (foreign currency deposit rates)			
Currency (deposit for)	3 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS
U.S. dollar (\$250,000)	4.770	4.800	5.090
Pound sterling (£100,000)	5.550	5.540	5.820
German mark (DM 200,000)	2.180	2.280	2.700
Swiss franc (SF 200,000)	0.080	0.190	0.560
Yen (10 million yen)	—	—	—

(Rates vary higher or lower than indicated according to deposit)
Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates* (15.12.98)

CHECKS AND TRANSFERS		BANKNOTES		Rep. Rates**
Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell	
Currency basket	4.5382	4.6084	—	4.5784
U.S. dollar	4.1247	4.1913	4.05	4.1640
German mark	2.4883	2.5356	2.45	2.5131
Pound sterling	5.9473	7.0594	6.82	7.0280
French franc	0.7431	0.7551	0.73	0.7498
Japanese yen (100)	3.5372	3.5943	3.47	3.5758
Dutch florin	2.2112	2.2469	2.17	2.2299
Swiss franc	0.0948	0.1348	0.03	0.1128
Swedish krona	0.5124	0.5207	0.50	0.5165
Norwegian krone	0.5270	0.5355	0.51	0.5319
Danish krone	0.8550	0.8658	0.84	0.8603
Finland mark	0.8196	0.8331	0.80	0.8285
Canadian dollar	2.6740	2.7172	2.62	2.6995
Australian dollar	2.5724	2.6139	2.52	2.5983
S. African rand	0.6838	0.6948	0.62	0.6900
Belgian franc (10)	1.2082	1.2277	1.18	1.2184
Austrian schilling (10)	3.5425	3.5897	3.48	3.5713
Italian lire (1000)	2.5188	2.5574	2.47	2.5378
Jordanian dinar	5.7972	5.8906	5.69	5.9129
Egyptian pound	—	—	1.17	1.2598
ECU	4.8950	4.9740	—	4.9352
Irish punt	6.1886	6.2885	6.08	6.2431
Spanish peseta (100)	2.9289	2.9782	2.87	2.9594

*These rates vary according to bank. **Bank of Israel.
SOURCE: BANK LEUMI

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Anchorage Olympic organizer: I was solicited for bribes

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — One of the organizers of Anchorage's unsuccessful bids for the 1992 and 1994 Winter Olympics said Monday he was solicited for bribes by agents of the International Olympic Committee.

Rick Nerland, who served as executive vice president with the Anchorage Olympic Organizing Committee, said the incidents occurred in the mid- and late 1980s.

"It was suggested to me by an individual that, for financial payment, votes could be influenced," said Nerland, who owns an Anchorage advertising and public relations agency. "I told them we didn't need that kind of help."

Nerland revealed the bribes for the first time in an interview with KTUU-TV in Anchorage.

Nerland's revelations came two days after Marc Hodler, a senior

IOC official from Switzerland, accused four people of vote-buying and cited alleged irregularities in the selection of four Olympic cities — Salt Lake City; Atlanta; Nagano, Japan; and Sydney, Australia.

The IOC also is investigating another scandal surrounding the selection of Salt Lake City for the 2002 Winter Olympics. That case centers on a scholarship fund set up by the Salt Lake bidding committee.

The fund gave nearly \$400,000 in scholarship aid to 13 people, including six relatives of IOC members.

Nerland refused to name the individuals who solicited the bribes from Anchorage organizers.

Nerland said he had heard rumors that bribes were solicited from cities bidding for the games and was disappointed when it occurred.

Not much personality from the BBC

London Calling



Mark Rivlin

With the ever-increasing list of sporting failures produced in this country, Sunday night's annual BBC TV Sports Personality of the Year ceremony was never going to be compulsive viewing.

It is actually rather appropriate that the BBC sponsor the award, as the mediocrity of British sporting prowess appears to have a direct correlation with the paucity of mainstream sport the BBC covers. And with the greatest respect to athletes Denise Lewis and Iwan Thomas, who came second and third in the BBC viewers' poll, winning European Commonwealth Games heptathlon medals is hardly akin to taking on the world's best.

Liverpool striker Michael Owen scooped the first prize — ironically on the day he missed a penalty kick for his club at Wimbledon. Owen certainly kept our spirits high over the summer — his superb goal against Argentina in the World Cup last-16 game was a real classic.

But when one considers past winners like Tony Jacklin, Jackie Stewart and Ian Botham, veritable British giants who were tops on the world stage, it looked a little bit like

our national broadcaster was scraping the bottom of a pretty cheap barrel in trying to find a local hero doing rather well around the world. Owen's club, meanwhile, is experiencing free-fall through the Premiership after the 1-0 setback at Wimbledon. The club has lost eight of its last 11 games, the worst run of results in 44 years, and has kept only one clean sheet in the past 13 games.

Ominously for Gerard Houllier, the great name of Liverpool FC lies just nine points ahead of the relegation zone. Defeat at home to Celtic Vigo in the UEFA Cup last Tuesday (courtesy of Haim Revivo's excellent solo goal) left Liverpool with only the league and cup for this season. Now the Premiership is also beyond them, and they also face a tricky third-round FA Cup tie at home to Port Vale in January.

Whatever problems Liverpool have, they are insignificant compared to First Division Portsmouth, who could well be wound up in this, the club's centenary year. Defeat on Sunday at home to Grimsby leaves this once proud south-coast team languishing in the relegation

Premiership. Charlton agreeing to an £800,000 price tag. Ball knows the price for Aloisi is very low. "Charlton are out of their minds if they do not realize they have the bargain of all time," an angry Ball said on Sunday. "To sell the player at that price is ridiculous, and that's why I have said that I won't have anything to do with it."

The fans, meanwhile staged two pitch demonstrations during and after the Grimsby game and were only placated when Ball reassured them he had their interests at heart.

And so to England's cricketers. Defeat at Adelaide now means the rest of the Ashes series has no relevance. The poor performance has been somewhat overshadowed by the revelations concerning betting agents contacting players and asking about match conditions.

Last week it was Mark Waugh and Shane Warne, but that didn't seem to have any effect on the Aussies' performance. On the pitch, Sunday's dramatic batting collapse, when seven wickets went down for 70 runs, was the catalyst for defeat.

And when the England bowling attack was being pummeled in the

Australian second innings, a local shout at Aussie-bred Alan Mullally: "Hey Al, you must feel pretty stupid turning into a Pom."

The great Sir Donald Bradman, who at 93 does not venture to watch cricket even at his beloved Adelaide home ground, told reporters that the trouble with the England batsmen is that they refuse to dominate the bowlers. The great man is too kind.

Finally a name from the past to warm the hearts of all Spurs and Arsenal fans. Pat Jennings is making a name for himself as goalkeeper with Chesham United in the Ryman League Premier Division. This is Pat junior, son of the legendary keeper who was a rare commodity — popular in both north London camps (the jury is still out on George Graham), making over 1,000 league appearances and 119 internationals.

Pat junior has had spells with Wimbledon and Arsenal and has already been called up to the Northern Ireland under-18 squad. And if he needs any advice, then he can go to his father, who is goal-keeping coach at Tottenham.

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AMG white, sun roof, white wheel, full extras, \$9,900, top condition, call Mark Winter any time. Tel: 03-527-0621, 050-717-981. [795025]

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SPORTS

in brief

Patriots' Bledsoe to miss game against 49ers

FOXBORO, Massachusetts (Reuters) - New England Patriots coach Pete Carroll said on Monday that Bledsoe will not start Sunday's home game against the San Francisco 49ers to give his broken right index finger a chance to heal. In addition to using a reserve quarterback against the 49ers, the Patriots will be without wide receiver Terry Glenn, who fractured his right ankle against the Rams and is out for the season.

Panthers suspend Greene for attacking coach

CHARLOTTE (Reuters) - The Carolina Panthers suspended three-time Pro Bowl linebacker Kevin Greene for one game without pay on Monday for attacking an assistant coach during Sunday's game. Greene will be banned from the team's practice facility through the week and will miss the game against the St. Louis Rams. Panthers coach Dom Capers said. The missed paycheck will cost Greene \$117,000.

Cincinnati, Arizona win in college basketball

CINCINNATI (AP) - No. 4 Cincinnati Bearcats defeated visiting Nicholls State 93-70 in the only Top 25 college basketball action on Monday.

McGwire, Sosa share SI Sportsman of Year award

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa, who rewrote baseball's record book with their thrilling home run hitting duel, have been chosen as Sports Illustrated Sportsman of the Year, the magazine announced on Monday. McGwire set a major league record in 1998 by belting 70 home runs for the St. Louis Cardinals to smash the 37-year-old mark of 61 hit by Roger Maris of the 1961 New York Yankees. Sosa, who led the Chicago Cubs into the playoffs, finished the season with 66 and was named NL MVP.

\$20 million loan to Penguins approved

PITTSBURGH (AP) - Over the objection of some creditors, the Pittsburgh Penguins were given permission Monday by a federal bankruptcy judge to borrow \$20 million from a French bank. The loan will allow the Penguins to meet their payroll and remain in business until the start of the 1999-2000 NHL season.

Hearst's 198 yards lead SF over Lions



SAN FRANCISCO (Reuters) - Garrison Hearst - and even quarterback Steve Young - out-rushed Barry Sanders, setting team records in the process, as the San Francisco 49ers trounced the Detroit Lions 35-13 on Monday night.

Hearst rushed for a franchise-record 198 yards and a touchdown and Young scrambled 10 times for 66 yards and a score as San Francisco set a team record with 328 yards on the ground.

Hearst had 127 yards and Young 46 in the first half, when the 49ers (11-3) opened a commanding 21-0 lead.

Meanwhile, the San Francisco defense held Sanders, the league's second all-time leading rusher, to just eight yards on 11 carries in the first half and a total of 28 yards on 14 carries.

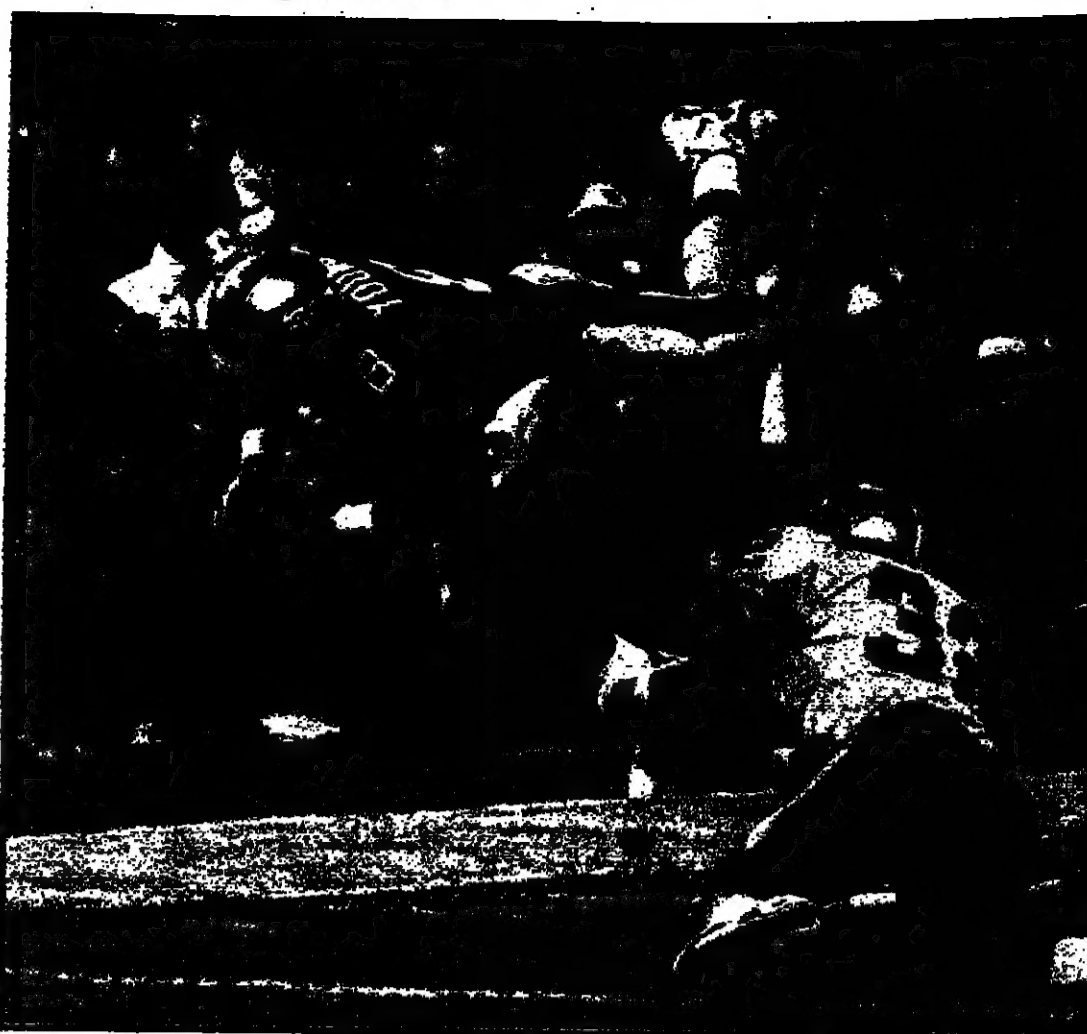
Sanders fell into fourth place in the NFL in rushing this season with 1,356 yards - 86 behind Hearst.

"We played against the best running back in the league and we stopped him tonight," said Hearst. Hearst carried the ball 24 times and broke the team record for one-game rushing yardage set by Delvin Williams with 194 in 1976.

Hearst's 1,442 yards on the ground this season is second-best in team history, just 60 behind Roger Craig's 1988 total with two games to go.

Young, who had an eight-yard touchdown run in the third quarter, completed 12-of-18 passes for just 82 yards.

"When we started running the



FLYING HIGH - San Francisco 49ers quarterback Steve Young is upended by Detroit Lions cornerback Bryant Westbrook at the end of a 17-yard run in the first quarter. (Reuters)

ball so well and so effectively, down after down after down, you'd be crazy not to go back to it," said Young.

Terry Kirby also had a 31-yard TD run as the Niners eclipsed the

previous team mark for single-game rushing yardage of 324, accomplished in 1961 against Minnesota.

Detroit's rookie quarterback Charlie Batch left with a lower

back injury in the second period after being sacked by Chris Doleman and Brenston Buckner. X-rays were negative but Batch did not return.

Detroit scored all its 13 points

a point-after kick was blocked in the fourth quarter when the game was already out of hand, and when Kirby added his score for the Niners.

Detroit 0 0 0 13-13
San Francisco 7 14 7 7-35
First Quarter: SF-Hearst 5 run (Rickey kick), 4:54. Second Quarter: SF-Kirby 1 run (Rickey kick), 12:08. SF-Owens 1 pass from Young (Rickey kick), 15:06. Third Quarter: SF-Kirby 2 run (Rickey kick), 5:46. Fourth Quarter: Det-Moore 24 pass from Heltz (kick blocked), 11:24. SF-Kirby 31 run (Rickey kick), 2:12. Det-Sims 8 pass from Heltz (Hansen kick), 1:02. A-68,58,55.

AMERICAN CONFERENCE											
	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA					
East											
x-N.Y. Jets	10	4	0	.714	368	246					
Buffalo	9	5	0	.643	345	283					
Miami	9	5	0	.643	274	286					
New England	8	6	0	.571	303	277					
Indianapolis	3	11	0	.214	268	390					
Central											
Jacksonville	10	4	0	.714	361	283					
San Diego	9	5	0	.643	292	249					
Pittsburgh	7	7	0	.500	236	257					
Baltimore	5	9	0	.357	247	301					
Cincinnati	2	12	0	.143	243	393					
West											
x-Denver	13	1	0	.929	452	257					
Oakland	7	7	0	.500	247	315					
Seattle	7	7	0	.500	324	259					
Kansas City	6	8	0	.429	289	311					
San Diego	5	9	0	.357	218	309					

NATIONAL CONFERENCE											
	W	L	T	Pct.	PF	PA					
East											
Dallas	8	6	0	.571	345	259					
Arizona	7	7	0	.500	290	348					
N.Y. Giants	4	8	0	.333	229	292					
Washington	5	9	0	.357	292	382					
Philadelphia	3	11	0	.214	142	311					
Central											
x-Minnesota	13	1	0	.929	480	270					
Green Bay	9	5	0	.643	362	284					
Tampa Bay	7	7	0	.500	263	275					
Denver	5	9	0	.357	279	325					
Chicago	3	11	0	.214	239	369					
West											
x-Atlanta	12	2	0	.857	380	254					
x-San Francisco	11	3	0	.786	420	285					
New Orleans	6	8	0	.429	255	295					
St. Louis	4	10	0	.286	253	320					
Carolina	2	12	0	.143	289	381					
x-clinched playoff berth											
x-clinched division title											

Rangers down Flames



NEW YORK (AP) - Marc Savard and Adam Graves scored power-play goals in the first period and the New York

Rangers went on to a 5-2 victory over the Calgary Flames on Monday night.

The Rangers also got another power-play goal from Petr Nedved in the third period, as they converted three of five chances with the man advantage to snap a two-game losing streak.

Mike Knuble and Mathieu Schneider also scored for the Rangers. Steve Smith and Theo Fleury scored for the Flames, who had a two-game winning streak snapped.

Canadiens 2, Coyotes 2

Teppo Numminen scored with 1:53 left in the third period as visiting Phoenix rallied twice in the final minutes for a tie with Montreal.

The game was marred for Phoenix by an injury to scoring leader Keith Tkachuk, who did not come out for the third period after suffering a groin injury. It was not immediately known how serious the injury was.

Phoenix rookie Daniel Briere tied the score at 1-1 at 14:53 of the third only to see Benoit Brunet put Montreal back in front at 17:13.

The Coyotes, first overall in the NHL, extended their unbeaten streak to five games.

Blues 0, Avalanche 0

Colorado's Patrick Roy and St. Louis' Grant Fuhr both put on flawless performances as the host

Avalanche and Blues played to a scoreless tie.

Roy stopped 32 shots in the Avalanche net, while Fuhr made 22 saves.

Roy, who was involved in a scoreless tie on November 2, 1996 against Buffalo's Dominik Hasek, recorded his 43rd career shutout and second of the season against St. Louis.

Playing his second game after coming back from an injured groin, Fuhr gained his 24th shutout and first against the Colorado-Quebec franchise.

EASTERN CONFERENCE											
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA					
Atlantic Division											
New Jersey	17	7	3	37	81	67					
Philadelphia	13	9	6	32	78	64					
Pittsburgh	11	7	7	29	75	67					
N.Y. Rangers	11	11	7	29	77	73					
N.Y. Islanders	10	10	0	20	69	83					
Northeast Division											
Buffalo	15	5	5	35	73	45					
Toronto	16	11	2	34	86	87					
Boston	12	8	6	30	67	58					
Ottawa	13	10	3	29	77	64					
Montreal	16	5	5	37	65	85					
Southeast Division											
Carolina	13	11	5	31	77	67					
Florida	9	11	6	24	66	74					
Washington	8	16	3	19	57	74					
Tampa Bay	8	18	2	18	61	102					

WESTERN CONFERENCE											
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA					
Central Division											
Detroit	16	10	1	33	87	66					
St. Louis	9	9	7	25	63	58					
Nashville	10	14	3	23	62	80					
Chicago	9	16	4	22	68	97					
Northwest Division											
Colorado	13	12	3	29	69	72					
Edmonton	13	13	3	29	83	77					
Calgary	11	16	2	24	79	85					
Vancouver	10	14	4	24	78	83					
Pacific Division											
Phoenix	17	3	4	38	70	39					
Dallas	16	5	5	37	74	54					
Anaheim	11	11	6	28	65	69					
Los Angeles	8	18	3	19	60	80					
San Jose	6	14	7	19	57	68					

Renteria traded to Cards

NASHVILLE, Tennessee (AP) - Edgar Renteria, Butch Huskey and Brant Brown found new homes. And the Toronto Blue Jays are going home - without trading Roger Clemens.

The winter meetings produced more than a half-dozen deals Monday, plus this juicy tidbit: Heisman Trophy winner Ricky Williams was picked by Montreal in the major league draft, though he may be headed to the Texas Rangers.

Yet there was absolutely no movement for another University of Texas star athlete. Clemens is coveted by nine teams.

"There's no chance it will happen here," Clemens' agent, Randy Hendricks, promised.

The big deal of the day came shortly before midnight when the Florida Marlins traded Renteria, their All-Star shortstop and hero of the 1997 World Series, to the St. Louis Cardinals for three top prospects.

Also, the New York Mets traded outfielder Butch Huskey to Seattle. The Chicago Cubs dealt outfielder Brant Brown to Pittsburgh for pitcher Jon Lieber. St. Louis sent pitcher Mark Pekovsek to Anaheim and Minnesota moved outfielder Alex Ochoa to Milwaukee.

A couple of free-agent catchers signed - Bill Haselman with Detroit

and Chad Kreuter with Kansas City. In off-the-field activity, general managers made no change to the playoff format. Some had been in favor of allowing wild cards to face their own division's winner in the first round.

The Marlins acquired minor league pitchers Braden Loper and Armando Almanza and shortstop Pablo Ozuna for Renteria, 23. The deal left Florida with just four players from its 25-man roster that won the championship last year.

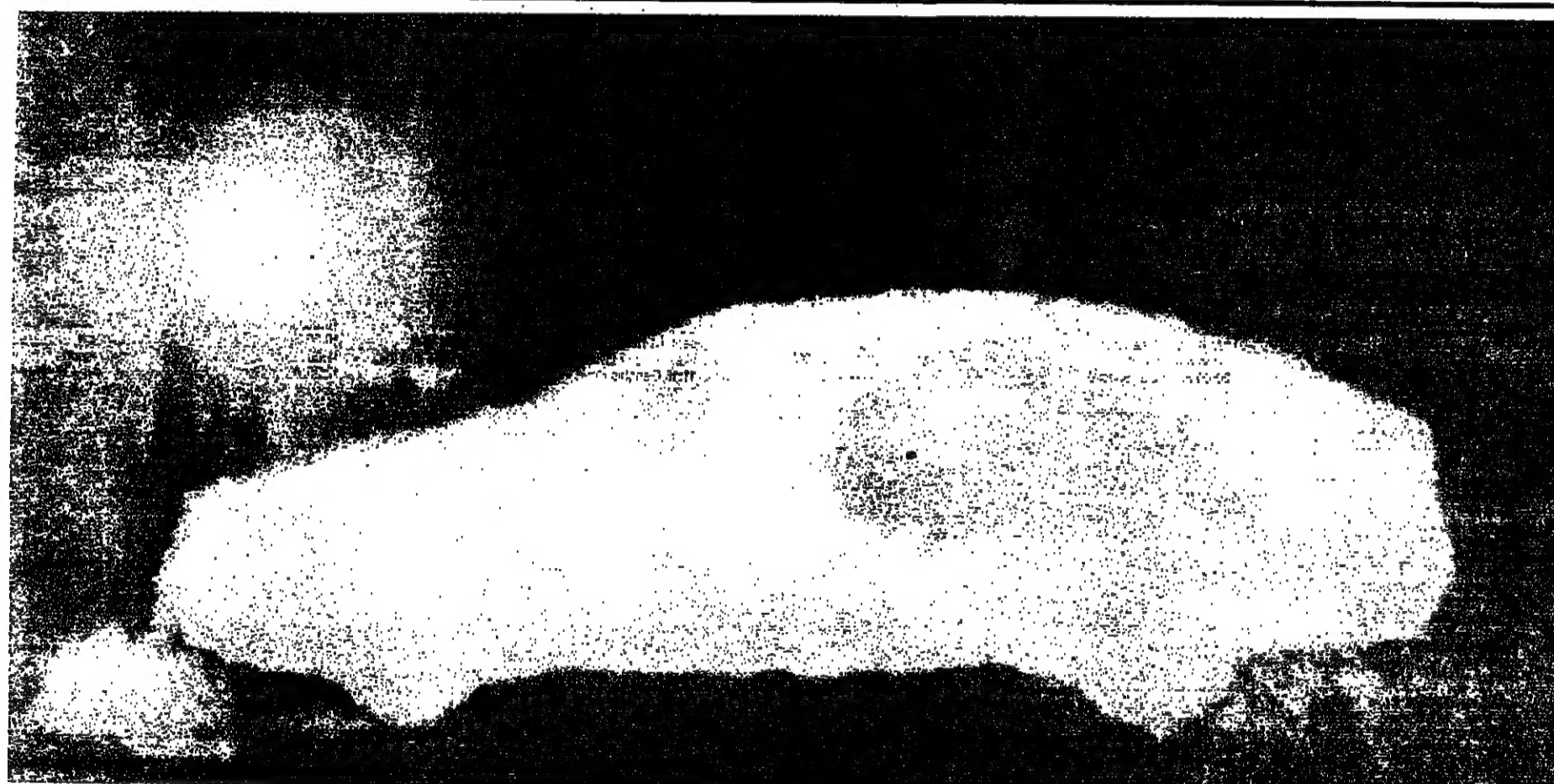
Renteria hit .282 with three home runs and 31 RBIs, and also stole 41 bases.

He fills the hole created July 31 when the Cardinals sent shortstop Royce Clayton to Texas.

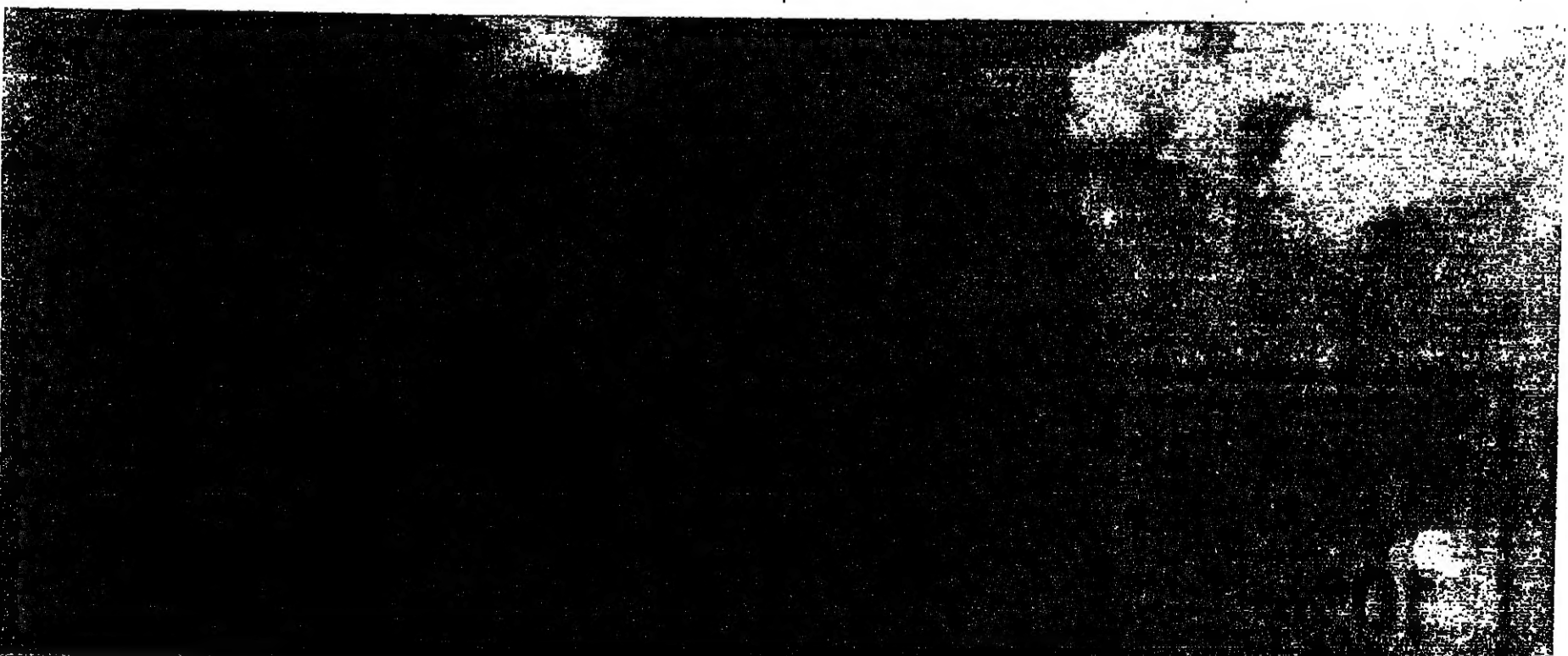
Loper, 24, was the overall third pick in the June 1996 draft. Ozuna, 20, hit a league-leading .357, stole 62 bases and was picked as the Midwest League player of the year, and Almanza led the Carolina League with 36 saves in 1997.

The Mets, already one of the majors' most active teams this winter, sent Huskey to Seattle for major league pitcher Lesli Brea.

Huskey, 27, hit .252 with 13 home runs and 59 RBIs last season. Brea, a 20-year-old righthander, was 3-4 with 12 saves and 2.76 ERA in 49 games for Class A Wisconsin in the Midwest League. He struck out 86 in 58 2/3 innings.



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הכרזת מלחמה

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defeat
Lions

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personality
from BBC

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Sports Editors
Joe Hoffman & Ori LewisHap. Jer. beats
Kurmand

By ARYEN DEAN COHEN

Neither snow nor a broken 30-second clock could deter Hapoel Jerusalem from gaining its rightful second place in Group E in Saporta Cup play last night, as Efi Birnbaum's club beat Hungary's Kurmand 90-84 in overtime behind Radisav Curcic's 32 points.

The victory means Jerusalem will face a far weaker Antwerp squad in the next round of play, rather than Limoges, and ended Hapoel's first stanza of Saporta Cup action with a 7-3 record.

Things looked as bleak as the weather outside the arena late in the second half, with Hapoel trailing 65-57 with just over five minutes to play. But Kenny Williams, who was benched early in the first half, hit two three-pointers as part of his 18 points on the night and Jerusalem rallied. With the hosts clinging to a 76-73 lead, H. Waldman buried a three-pointer to tie it, but then the technical glitches began.

The 30-second clock broke down several times before it could be repaired for the last 42.5 seconds. Williams managed to get off a last-second shot, but it missed, sending the game into OT.

Fortunately, the Hungarians finally cooled down in overtime. Williams stayed hot with two hoops in the extra period and added a key block down the stretch.

Australia retain Ashes with 205-run win

ADELAIDE, Australia (AP) — Australia trounced England by a mammoth 205 runs to retain the Ashes for a record-equalling sixth successive time at the Adelaide Oval yesterday.

Past bowler Glenn McGrath triggered another collapse either side of lunch on the last day as England, chasing a mammoth 443 runs to win, was bowled out for 237 runs just 24 minutes after the break.

"It hurts a lot," England's skipper Alec Stewart said after the humiliating defeat. "We came here with the intention of regaining the Ashes, but we haven't played to our full potential. We have underperformed in this series so far."

Stewart top-scored for England with an unbeaten 63 as his side lost 5-16 off 27 balls in 24 minutes after resuming the day on 122 for four.

"When it comes to the crunch we haven't performed," Stewart said. "They are the best side in the world, and when they get in winning positions they stay in winning positions. We have good patches, but we don't have enough good patches. Australia batted and bowled better than us. I've played in a losing Ashes side for the last 10 years and it hurts."

England's second-innings collapse followed the first innings debacle of losing 7-40 in just 64 minutes on the third morning.

"If our top seven batsmen can't get the runs on the board, you can't expect the tail to do it for you," Stewart added. "The difference in the two sides have been the tail. Our's hasn't wagged at all in the last few years."

Stewart refused to agree that English cricket has deteriorated. "What I believe is that the other countries have improved. We have to produce cricketers with mental strength and talent."

Once Australia claimed the



THE VANQUISHED AND THE VICTORS — England captain Alec Stewart walks off the pitch after losing the match in Adelaide yesterday, while the Australian squad congratulate each other after retaining the Ashes.

prized wicket of Mark Ramprakash for 57, the right hander took away with him England's hopes of salvaging an unlikely draw.

But Stewart, with his first major contribution in the series, and John Crawley (13) took the side within two balls of the break when disaster struck.

Crawley's edge to second slip Mark Waugh began triggered the collapse.

McGrath armed with the second new ball took 4-15 in 21 balls to hurry an Australian win. He fin-

ished with 4-50 and enjoys an Ashes tally of 58 wickets in 11 Tests.

Justin Langer, who complemented his career-best unbeaten 179 with a fine 52 in the second innings, was voted man-of-the-match.

Mark Taylor, with his 25th win in 48 Tests as captain, said his side enjoyed the "mental edge" over their opponents and had enjoyed doing it without bowler Shane Warne.

"We have certainly got the men-



tal edge over England, there is no doubt about that, and that comes from a number of good performances over the last 10 years or so," said Taylor. "The pattern has been set in the series with two Tests remaining. It is a feeling of relief as well as a great thrill after the disappointment in Brisbane."

England narrowly escaped defeat in the first Test when the weather intervened.

We "treat the Ashes series very highly. We have taken on different challenges in world cricket and

Ashes is a very special one." Taylor felt there was an "enormous gulf" between the two sides because of Australia's depth. "There are a lot of players outside keeping the pressure on everyone in the current team. That's the reason we are so strong."

Scoreboard
Yesterday at the end of the third Test between Australia and England at the Adelaide Oval:
Australia won the Test.
Australia, 1st innings 391
England, 1st innings 227
Australia, 2nd innings 278-8 dec
England, 2nd innings 237-10
Overnight 122 for four
Mark Waugh c Healy b Fleming 19
Mike Johnston c Mark Waugh b Miller 5

Neaseer Hussain bow b Miller 41
Mark Ramprakash b Fleming 57
Dean Headley c Mark Waugh b Miller 68
Alec Stewart not out 63
John Crawley c Mark Waugh b McGrath 13
Graeme Hick c Fleming b McGrath 3
Darren Gough c Healy b McGrath 0
Alan Mullally c Healy b Fleming 1
Peter Such bow b McGrath 30
Extras (75, 88, 140) 0
TOTAL 237 all out
Fall of wickets: 27, 31, 120, 122, 165, 221, 221, 231, 236
Bowling: Glenn McGrath 17-0-50-4 (11mb), Darren Fleming 21-3-36-3 (3mb), Colin Miller 24-1-27-0, Stuart Mitchell 25-3-46-2, Steve Waugh 2-1-0-0.
Batting time: 336 minutes. Ours: 89 Result: Australia won by 205 runs.
Man-of-the-match: Justin Langer (Australia).
First Test in Brisbane: Dreami Second Test in Perth: Australia won by seven wickets.
Fourth Test in Melbourne: December 26-30. First Test in Sydney: January 2-6

Graham Kelly quits in FA bribe scandal

LONDON (AP) — Graham Kelly quit as chief executive of the English Football Association yesterday in the latest potential bribery scandal to hit the sports world.

The stunning move arises out of a £3.2 million loan promised to the Welsh FA in what newspa-

per reports have interpreted as an attempted bribe to help FA chairman Keith Wiseman gain a high-ranking FIFA position.

According to spokesman David Davies, FA members accepted Kelly's resignation and also passed a vote of no confidence in Wiseman, although he had refused

to quit.

The FA scandal comes at a time when bribery allegations are rife in Olympic circles. International Olympic Committee executive board member Marc Hodler has alleged the practice of buying and selling of votes in the election of host cities.

The announcement of the change came from Davies after a meeting of the FA executive committee at its headquarters at Lancaster Gate in west London.

"The FA's executive committee met today to discuss the positions of our chairman and chief executive," Davies said.

"This followed contacts over recent months with the Football Association of Wales and the actions in that connection of Keith Wiseman and Graham Kelly."

"The executive committee has this afternoon accepted the resignation of Graham Kelly. They have thanked him for his 10 years of dedicated work at Lancaster Gate and wished him well for the future."

"They have also passed a unanimous vote of no confidence in the chairman Keith Wiseman," Davies said.

"He was informed of this personally by the vice-chairman, Geoff Thompson. He has declined to resign."

"The executive will seek endorsement for their action at a special FA council meeting in early January. This vote of no confidence, I stress, was taken unanimously by an executive committee that represents all sections of the game."

"It was taken with sadness and only after considerable examination of all the circumstances; it

was not taken lightly."

"Contrary to some unfair speculation, it wasn't part of any personal campaign against any individual," Davies said. "Such an outcome has been painful for all those involved in taking the decision."

Davies then read out a statement from Wiseman.

"The issue is one for the full Football Association Council," he said.

"I do not intend to make any comment at all until I have shared the full circumstances of this matter with them all — save that the version of events carried hitherto in the national press is a gross distortion of the truth."

At the time of the initial reports last week, Wiseman said that he always acted "in the interests of the FA."

"There is nothing wrong or unusual in helping smaller footballing countries — be they close neighbors or those further afield — in financial and other ways within their development plans and youth programs," Wiseman said.

Davies said that the executive committee decided that he would take over Kelly's position for the time being and that Thompson would take Wiseman's position, pending the meeting of the FA Council.

"It is the wish of the executive committee that the vice-chairman Geoff Thompson should lead the FA in the immediate future," Davies said.

"They have also asked me to become executive director in overall charge of everyday running of the FA for the time being," Davies said.

"I do so in the confidence that I have the backing of the staff."

Asia threatens
World Cup boycott

BANGKOK (AP) — Asian soccer officials yesterday put on hold a threatened boycott of the 2002 World Cup and said that even if it goes ahead, co-hosts Japan and South Korea still will be exempted.

The Asian Football Confederation's executive committee, after an emergency meeting, warned that the boycott would proceed unless FIFA expands the number of slots allocated to Asia for the World Cup.

"All of the members spoke up very much in favor of a boycott of 2002," AFC general secretary Peter Velappan told a news conference. "But we will honor the responsibility of hosting the World Cup."

The formula of a boycott exempting Japan and South Korea balances the demands of Arab members to retaliate against FIFA while taking into account the millions spent by the two Asian nations to jointly stage the cup finals.

Committee members said Asia was not "treated fairly or taken seriously" by FIFA, despite being home to 40 percent of the world's population and comprising a large number of television viewers.

Asia was allocated four berths for 2002, including the two reserved for Japan and South Korea as hosts. At last week's announcement, FIFA portrayed it as an increase from the three guaranteed plus the chance for a fourth, which Iran eventually earned by beating Australia in a two-leg playoff.

But the AFC sees the allocation as only a pair, a reduction of one guaranteed plus the chance for a second.

In 1994, CONCACAF's allocation of two berths was not

increased, despite the US serving as host.

FIFA spokesman Keith Cooper's said that the AFC has not officially notified the world body of any problem.

"We have no official communication from them," Cooper said in Zurich.

He declined to speculate on the possibility of reopening issue, "as we've not received any request for such a thing to happen."

The dispute underscores the changes in the tournament with the first-ever dual-host attempt. The World Cup host nation has always qualified automatically, but two reserved slots significantly reduced the chances for other Asian nations to qualify.

"Our decision is not irrational or unreasonable, our decision is fair," Velappan said.

FIFA President Sepp Blatter contacted the Asian confederation before the meeting and offered the body four places for the 2006 World Cup, without mentioning 2002.

"Why should he dangle a carrot at us about 2006? We're trying to focus on 2002," said Velappan, who is also FIFA's coordinator for the 2002 cup.

The committee decided to send a six-member delegation to meet FIFA President Sepp Blatter in February ahead of a high-level FIFA meeting in March to persuade him to restore the lost slot.

If the FIFA meeting fails to change course and satisfy the Asians, the AFC will call another meeting to implement the boycott, which would pull 40 teams out of the World Cup qualifying rounds.

Maccabi Haifa awaits draw today for
Cup Winners' Cup quarterfinals

By OFER RONEN-ABELS

Maccabi Haifa go into today's draw for the quarterfinal stage of the European Cup Winners' Cup in Geneva with high hopes.

Haifa became the first Israeli side to reach this level after knocking out Glentworth of Northern Ireland, France's PSG and Austrian side SV Reid in the competition's earlier stages.

Haifa hopes it will retain the same luck it has had so far in drawing the second leg at home, but it is not clear which team it would be most preferable to be drawn against.

Seven teams go into the draw with Haifa for the quarterfinal's two legs, which will take place on March 2 and 16.

England's Chelsea is currently the holders of the Cup Winners Cup and are in third place in the Premiership, were they haven't been beaten since the opening day of the season.

Spanish side Real Mallorca has taken the Spanish league by storm with a hold on first place after 14 games.

Mallorca are coached by Argentine Hector Cooper, who also has three fellow country-

men as players — national goalkeeper Carlos Roa, Ariel Lopez and Leonardo Biagini.

Italian side Lazio are tipped as favorites to win the cup after investing over \$107 million in the summer.

Chilean striker Marcelo Salas has already scored 12 overall goals this season and is partnered up front with Christian Vieri, who is currently injured but will be fit for March's fixtures.

Lazio, which has never won a European cup, are coached by Swedish coach Sven Goran Eriksson and also have Portuguese duo Fernando Couto and Sergio Conceicao on their squad.

Vaalerenga of Norway add to the Scandinavian connection after reaching the quarterfinals for the first time in their history in their first European attempt.

Vaalerenga, which is coached by former Norwegian Egil Olsen, surprised Europe by knocking out Turkish side Besiktas 4-3 (on aggregate) after an impressive comeback.

Croatia also have a representative in the final eight.

Despite being a small club (averaging only

2,000 fans), Varteks knocked out Dutch side Heerenveen in the earlier stage.

Varteks, which has no established international players, are familiar with Israeli football though, after playing the national team in a friendly in Austria over the summer.

Russian side Lokomotiv Moscow reached this stage for the second year running after beating SC Braga of Portugal. Lokomotiv were knocked out in the semifinal by Stuttgart last season and have a lot of experience at this level, but face three long months out of action as their league reaches its final stages now.

The seventh team that goes into the draw is Greek side Panionios, coached by former Liverpool midfielder Ronnie Whelan, who also brought with him two English players — former Norwich striker Mark Robins and Gary Haylock.

Panionios, which reached the quarterfinals at the expense of Cyprian neighbors Apollon Limassol, are not on top of their form as they currently are in 11th place in the Greek league and appear to be the easiest team to draw.

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ISRAEL
Tel Aviv 17/10
Jerusalem 15/5
Beersheba 17/6
Haifa 18/11
Netanya 17/10
Ariel 15/4
Tiberias 19/4
Katzir 17/9

EUROPE WEATHER TODAY
Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.
City Today High LowW High LowW High LowW High LowW
Ariel 15/5 4/38 15/5 2/25 17/6 5/43 15/9 4/28
Beersheba 17/6 5/43 17/6 5/43 17/6 5/43 17/6 5/43
Dead Sea 20/8 9/48 20/8 9/48 20/8 9/48 20/8 9/48
Elai 21/70 14/57 21/70 10/50 23/73 12/53 21/70 10/50
Haifa 18/11 11/52 18/11 11/52 20/66 11/52 18/11 11/52
Jerusalem 15/5 5/41 15/5 5/41 17/6 5/41 15/5 5/41
Kotzim 17/6 3/37 17/6 3/37 17/6 3/37 17/6 3/37
Netanya 17/6 10/50 17/6 10/50 19/6 10/50 17/6 10/50
Tel Aviv 17/6 10/50 17/6 10/50 19/6 10/50 17/6 10/50
Tiberias 19/6 4/38 17/6 4/38 19/6 4/38 17/6 4/38
Weather (W) = heavy, p = partly cloudy, o = cloudy, s = showers, H = high, L = low, S = snow, R = rain, V = variable, F = fog

INTERNATIONAL CITIES
City Today High LowW High LowW High LowW High LowW
Amsterdam 17/14 5/41 17/14 5/41 19/6 5/41 17/14 5/41
Belgium 17/14 5/41 17/14 5/41 19/6 5/41 17/14 5/41
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Brussels 17/14 5/41 17/14 5/41 19/6 5/41 17/14 5/41
Cairo 17/14 5/41 17/14 5/41 19/6 5/41 17/14 5/41
Chicago 17/14 5/41 17/14 5/41 19/6 5/41 17/14 5/41
Frankfurt 17/14 5/41 17/14 5/41 19/6 5/41 17/14 5/41
Hong Kong 22/71 20/68 23/73 21/70 25/77 21/70 25/77 21/70
Johannesburg 22/71 17/62 23/73 17/62 25/77 17/62 25/77 17/62
London 17/14 5/41 17/14 5/41 19/6 5/41 17/14 5/41
Los Angeles 17/14 5/41 17/14 5/41 19/6 5/41 17/14 5/41
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Washington 17/14 5/41 17/14 5/41 19/6 5/41 17/14 5/41
Zurich 17/14 5/41 17/14 5/41 19/6 5/41 17/14 5/41

NORTH AMERICA WEATHER TODAY
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Seattle 17/14 5/41 17/14 5/41 19/6 5/41 17/14 5/41
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